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**LIFE AND LETTERS
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LIFE AND LETTERS
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BY
BLISS PERRY

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II



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

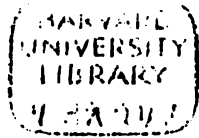
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Henry Lee Higginson
1908

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF HENRY LEE HIGGINSON

CHAPTER X

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(1881-1914)¹

All good work takes time and life-blood — and shows us why most of us must live long to do a real piece of work. — H. L. H. to A. W. THAYER, *July 21, 1887*.

Welche grosse Opfer bringst Du der Musik! Dein Name wird nicht vergessen werden. Dein alter Verehrer und Freund, JULIUS EPSTEIN. — To H. L. H., *July 15, 1914*.

The orchestra sprang from the faith of my youth and has been the faith of my life and of my old age. — From H. L. H.'s penciled memoranda for his farewell address, *May 4, 1918*.

No one knows the precise hour when Henry Higginson first dreamed his dream of founding a Symphony Orchestra in Boston. But again and again, in the closing years of his life, he stated that the idea came to him during his student days in Vienna.² The Civil War and the struggle for a livelihood forced his energies into other channels for a time, and it was not until the spring of 1881, following two or three years of marked success in business, that he was able at last to carry out his intention. No clearer statement of his purposes can be made than is contained in his address to the members of the Symphony Orchestra on April 27, 1914, in his eightieth year: —

GENTLEMEN: —

Sixty years ago I wished to be a musician, and therefore went to Vienna, where I studied two years and a half diligently,

¹ The story of the Symphony Orchestra during the World War will be told briefly in the concluding chapter.

² In a letter of Dec. 2, 1917, to President Eliot, he gives the date as 1857.

learned something of music, something about musicians, and one other thing — that I had no talent for music. I heard there and in other European cities the best orchestras, and much wished that our own country should have such fine orchestras. Coming home at the end of 1860, I found our country in trouble, and presently in a great war. Naturally I took part in the war, at the end of which time I did various things, and at last came to our present office in State Street, where I was admitted as a partner.

For many years I had hard work to earn my living and support my wife. Originally I had had a very small sum of money, which had been used up while studying in Vienna and during the war. All these years I watched the musical conditions in Boston, hoping to make them better. I believed that an orchestra of excellent musicians under one head and devoted to a single purpose could produce fine results, and wished for the ability to support such an undertaking; for I saw that it was impossible to give music at fair prices and make the Orchestra pay expenses.

After consulting with some European friends, I laid out a plan, and at the end of two very good years of business began concerts in the fall of 1881. It seemed best to undertake the matter single-handed, and, beyond one fine gift from a dear friend, I have borne the costs alone. All this is a matter of record, and yet it may interest you. It seemed clear that an orchestra of fair size and under possible conditions would cost at least \$20,000 a year more than the public would pay. Therefore, I expected this deficit each year, and faced contracts with seventy men and a conductor. It was a large sum of money, which depended on my business each year and on the public. If the concert halls were filled, that would help me; if my own business went well, that would help me; and the truth is, that the great public has stood by me nobly.

In my eyes the requisites about the Orchestra were these: to leave the choice and care of the musicians, the choice and

care of the music, the rehearsals and direction of the Orchestra, to the conductor, giving him every power possible; to leave to an able manager the business affairs of the enterprise; and on my part, to pay the bills, to be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, and always to remember that we were seeking high art and not money: art came first, then the good of the public, and the money must be an after consideration.

We began with Mr. Henschel as a conductor, taking the musicians of this town. I told Mr. Henschel that the Orchestra should play under one leader and only one, to learn his ways and to get the proper discipline; and he agreed with me. He conducted the Orchestra with much success for three years, during which time he drew a few men from Europe. He and the Orchestra worked hard, and gave us fair results.

Then I engaged in Vienna Mr. Gericke, who came here for five years, brought in his second year many good musicians from Europe, and really created our Orchestra. He became a great favorite with the public, which was very sorry to lose him. After Mr. Gericke came Mr. Nikisch, who did much brilliant work during four years; but, owing to a tempting offer from Europe, he left us and was succeeded by Mr. Paur, who stayed five years. He also gave us good concerts, and then Mr. Gericke came back for eight years, which many of you will remember well. He found the Orchestra in excellent condition, and, with his skill and admirable taste, brought it to a high pitch. Then came Dr. Muck for two years; then for three years Mr. Fiedler, to whom we also owe many beautiful concerts, and now Dr. Muck is here again.

Mr. Ellis suggested the summer concerts, in order to give more work to the members of the Orchestra; and this step met a want which was keenly felt. Mr. Gericke suggested the system of pensions, which was put in force and has given help to many past members of the Orchestra, and must be a comfort to you gentlemen of the Orchestra to-day as something to look forward to when you leave off work.

For the term of thirty-three years the total deficit is about \$900,000. My friends have begged me again and again to stop the concerts because the strain was too great; but the work has gone on, and the result is the present beautiful Orchestra, of which we all are proud.

We had been driven out of the old Music Hall in Hamilton Place because the city planned to put a street through the hall, and I welcomed the change, as the old hall was not well-aired, and was not very safe. Friends built the present hall, which I leased for a long term of years, as we must have it free for our use at all times. The hall is not rented so much as we could wish, the costs of keeping it in order are large, and therefore the yearly deficit ranges from \$13,000 to \$19,000.

Now what does each of us do for the Orchestra? Dr. Muck chooses the music, prepares everything for the public, conducts the rehearsals and the concerts. Each of you gentlemen does his part excellently, and each of you is as well treated as lies in my power. My part is to run the risk of each year's contracts, and to meet the deficit, which never will fall below \$20,000 yearly, and is often more. At present we have good luck in cities other than Boston, but it is a luck on which we cannot count, for good orchestras exist everywhere, and presently we may not be needed beyond our home. In Boston I have to take my luck, which thus far has been good; but there is always a chance, and you have only to reckon how many contracts I must sign, to see what a heavy burden would be on my shoulders if the concerts were not successful, and the audiences were small. Pray remember that I must go to my office daily, in order to earn money enough to carry on this enterprise yearly and to accumulate \$1,000,000, on the interest of which the Orchestra will depend after my death.¹ I do not wish to make too much of this point, but if our concerts were to cease, my work could cease, as my friends wish;

¹ Ultimately Mr. Higginson was compelled to abandon this long-cherished plan. See chap. xiv.

and please bear in mind that I shall be eighty years old next autumn.

There is the story. I am content and happy to go on with my work, and fully expect to get together enough money to carry on the Orchestra long after my death, if it is wanted; but without peace we cannot have a noble orchestra, and we cannot keep our reputation without excellent work by high-grade artists and as good a conductor as exists. All these things we have now; but if we do not have a peaceful life, it will drive me out of this business, and will destroy the Orchestra.

We have had to dismiss various men for good reasons, and we have replaced them by able, conscientious musicians — real artists, who play for the joy of the music. Do not suppose that I am ignorant about the various members of the orchestra. At one time I knew every man; and if that is not the case now, I know many of you, and listen carefully to the playing of this or that man; know well when Witek is doing his best, hear Ferir, hear Warnke, never miss a tone of Longy or Maquarre or Grisez or Wendler or Sadony; I know very well what the trumpets are doing, and the trombones, and watch the drummer, and listen for the tuba; I watch with pleasure the double basses as they stand behind you all. We lost Schuecker last year, and have in his place an admirable artist whose skill gives us much pleasure. In short, I watch the musicians almost too much, for it often interferes with my pleasure, thinking whether they are playing their best, and listening for the various points instead of listening for the whole. Whenever I go to a concert, there is always a sense of responsibility on my mind, and there is always great joy.

Gentlemen, to sum up: You see that I know your work, and now you know mine; I know your share, and know that you try to give us the best music in the best way; and on my part, I try to make your position as comfortable as possible. It would be a great pleasure to raise your pay to a still higher point, but I cannot.

One last word. Ever since my boyhood I have longed to have a part in some good work which would leave a lasting mark in the world. To-day we have a noble orchestra — the work of our hands — which gives joy and comfort to many people. Dr. Muck and I are glad to do our part, and, with your hearty coöperation, the work will last.

The frank simplicity of this story as told by Major Higginson needs no praise. But to estimate the full significance of his service to the cause of music, and the personal conditions under which that service was rendered, we must now go back to 1881, and to the inception of the great enterprise. Mr. Howe's admirable history of the Orchestra¹ covers the first thirty-three years of its existence. To his accurate and spirited record of that period there is little to be added, except some reminiscences by Major Higginson, written or spoken subsequently to 1914, and a few extracts from the ample bundle of Orchestra correspondence. It must be remembered that for many decades Mr. Higginson was carrying a great weight of business responsibilities, of philanthropic services to Harvard and other institutions, and of community activities of a hundred kinds, in addition to the load of the Orchestra. All these things were on his mind at the same time, and being given to speaking his mind freely, his general correspondence is full of references to Orchestra matters. It is characteristic of him that, on the back of an important letter from Mr. Henschel, there are penciled jottings about the day's work in State Street, — "Sell for our account 3000 C. & B. 6^a at 105," — and that between two important business letters in his copying-files there should be a curt cablegram to Mr. Gericke in Vienna: "Engagiren Sie niemand mehr."

It is now more than forty years since that March afternoon

¹ *The Boston Symphony Orchestra, An Historical Sketch*, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Boston and New York, 1914.

in 1881, when Mr. Higginson met Mr. Henschel at the house of Mrs. George D. Howe, at 17 Marlborough Street, and revealed his plan of founding an orchestra in Boston. Three noteworthy facts must be kept in mind, if we would measure the significance of that conversation. The first is the long preliminary brooding over the project, the tenacious holding to a youthful resolve. Mr. Higginson's wisest counselor in Europe was his old "chum," Julius Epstein of Vienna, who had become a famous professor at the Conservatory, and knew the foremost musicians in Austria and Germany. Out of a friendship which began in the eighteen-fifties and lasted until after the World War, Professor Epstein was able to render the most valuable service to the Orchestra from the very beginning.

The second fact, skillfully narrated by Mr. Howe, is the forty-years' preparation of the Boston musical public. Mr. Higginson could not have obeyed his friend Mrs. Fanny Kemble's injunction to "plant flowers in the great corn-field of America" if the soil had not been ready for him. It had all counted: J. S. Dwight's dream of "an orchestra worthy to execute the grand works of Haydn and Mozart," set forth in the "Dial" for July, 1840; the Academy of Music concerts in the eighteen-forties; the concerts of the Musical Fund Society and the Germania Orchestra in the fifties; the building of the Music Hall in 1852; the fine concerts of the Harvard Musical Association and the Philharmonic Society, under the leadership of Carl Zerrahn, for the seventeen years previous to 1881; and the early visits of Theodore Thomas's Orchestra to Boston.¹ Neither the seed-time nor the harvest failed.

And the third fact to be remembered is the swift audacity with which Mr. Higginson acted, as soon as his mind was made up. To engage Mr. Henschel, a brilliant musician with

¹ See Howe, *op. cit.*, chap. I, and the article by J. S. Dwight in the *Memorial History of Boston*, edited by Justin Winsor, 1880-81.

but little experience as a conductor, was running an indubitable risk. To undertake, single-handed, the support of an orchestra by his yearly earnings in State Street was an act of daring. Judged by ordinary standards of financial prudence, the founding and sustaining of the Symphony Orchestra was a reckless undertaking. But it was precisely the sort of unselfish recklessness which endeared the Major to his friends. It belonged, somehow, with his erect soldierly bearing, with his abrupt vigorous speech, with the sabre-scar across his finely modeled face.

This temperamental rashness, however, was only one side of a singularly many-sided man. The formal announcement of the enterprise, made by Mr. Higginson in the newspapers on March 30, 1881, and the long statement of the details of his scheme, entitled "*In re* the Boston Symphony Orchestra,"¹ reveal a carefully perfected plan, elaborated with minute attention to details, and with shrewd insight into human nature. The test of its soundness lies in the simple fact that the plan has worked, in all its essential features, from the very beginning. In the words of Mr. Howe, written in 1914: "The very details of the plan which Mr. Higginson put into words in the spring of 1881, before a single concert was given, have, to an extraordinary degree, been carried out. Except for the change of method in the sale of tickets, the inevitable advance of prices, and the substitution of nominal for actual rehearsals on Friday afternoons, it is hard to name any modifications of the original scheme which have not been developments rather than changes in its provisions." Never, in short, in all the rest of his life, did Henry Higginson exhibit more strikingly his capacity for straight, hard thinking.

And mingled with the hard thinking there was delicate sentiment, and the ever-present thought of his friends who had been sacrificed in the Civil War. He wrote to Miss Frances R. Morse, on September 18, 1881: —

¹ Howe, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-34.

I had a noble set of men-friends and loved them much and lived on them. They led me in part to thoughts and hopes which have resulted in this scheme. It seems to me to be worth while, and to be a little gravestone to them if anything, for they are all dead but one — a great loss to me and the world. To these friends I tried to give everything, because my belief was that one cannot do or give or take too much from a friend.

Older Bostonians remember vividly the excitement produced by Mr. Henschel's first season. He was only thirty-one, and he had the enthusiasm, the glamour, the daring of youth. Most of Mr. Higginson's friends were inclined to agree with John C. Bancroft, who had written in March: —

"I can't but think that for an experiment like yours Henschel must be the right type of man. I have only heard him sing and accompany himself and others, but he does both in such a masterly way, with so much fire, tenderness and poetry, and there is so much charm in his own compositions, that he is evidently a musician of exceeding fine fibre, and as you have seen him leading an orchestra to your satisfaction, it gives a well-rounded view of him. I cannot believe there will be any commonplace playing under a leader of that type. I don't think anyone could prophesy now how your experiment will work or what it may not lead to if successful — possibly great musical things for Boston in the future. Certainly it is something more than founding a first-class orchestra. . . ."

The seventy men directed by the new conductor were for the most part, it must be remembered, also players in the concerts of the Harvard Musical Association and the Philharmonic Society. It was natural that both players and public should compare Henschel, favorably or unfavorably, with Zerrahn and Maas. There were skeptics and scoffers, whose comments are amusingly quoted by Mr. Howe; but the twenty concerts under Mr. Henschel proved, on the whole, an amazing success.

Many of us remember the long waiting line of ticket-buyers in Hamilton Place, crowding the entrance to the old Music Hall; the endless debates over the conductor's programme-making; the joy of the Wagnerians and the wrath of the anti-Wagnerians, the puzzlement over Brahms. In the second season the number of Boston concerts was increased to twenty-six, and the Cambridge concerts — an integral part of Mr. Higginson's plan from the first — began. There were concerts, too, in many other New England cities, and the business arrangements grew steadily more complicated in consequence. Mr. John P. Lyman served valiantly as a volunteer treasurer. Mr. Higginson had secured the control of Music Hall, and Mr. Charles A. Ellis soon began his long service as manager.

When Mr. Henschel, at the end of his third season, returned to Europe and to his own career as a singer, the Symphony Orchestra had firmly established itself. The Orchestra correspondence of those three years still retains "the freshness of the early world." Here are Mr. Lyman's first designs for tickets, suggestions for newspaper advertising, records of the first struggles with speculators, and tentative lists for complimentary seats. Early in the third season (November 20, 1883) Mr. Lyman is able to report, in view of the probability that Mr. Henschel would not return for another season: —

"I am convinced that the Boston Symphony Orchestra is the head and Henschel the tail of the beast. You may be surprised that I should think it worth while to say this; but former years I have been in doubt whether people went to hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra or to hear the result of Henschel's conducting: for you must remember that he was a much persecuted man in 1881, and that sympathy and curiosity are powerful agents. But now, in the fine results that he has attained, his triumph has been achieved, popular sentimentality has in a large measure died out and people have come to regard the Orchestra as the main attraction, though the two are yet closely connected. If the new man has a wide and established

I think will have to be
somewhere in the neighbour-
hood of eight thousand
Dollars. (\$8000)

I am dear Sir

Very truly
Yours

George Henschel

FACSIMILE OF PORTION OF A LETTER FROM GEORGE HENSCHEL

reputation, he can begin where Henschel left off and perhaps do more."

On December 2, 1883, Mr. Ellis wrote to Mr. Higginson, who was then in Europe: —

"One third of our season is now over, and I am glad to write that the concerts have all been successful — we have not yet had a poor house in or out of Boston. I wish you could hear one concert — the Orchestra is stronger and plays very much better than ever before, and Mr. Henschel deserves great credit for it. Many of the men now say he has no superior as a conductor, and I am sure every one of them will be sorry when he goes. . . .

"Mr. Cotting wants us to give some light summer concerts: he proposes to decorate Music Hall with plants, etc., making a kind of garden of it, and will either rent it to us at a low rate, or for a percentage of receipts sharing the risk with us. I believe such a series would go. I talked last summer with Mr. Listemann about it, and he said the men would be glad to accept at a small salary (say \$18 a week) a summer engagement that would keep them at home. There are enough people in Boston summer evenings with nothing to do who would support such concerts."

There are many letters from Julius Epstein, who followed every phase of the Orchestra's development with the keenest professional and personal interest. But it is the letters in the bold hand of Sir George Henschel, which bring back most vividly the beginnings of the Orchestra. On March 17, 1881, he is considering — with a thoughtfulness imitated by all of his successors — the question of salary. A week later he is ready to sign the contract, and thinks "The Symphony Orchestra of Boston; Conductor, Mr. George Henschel, would be the best title after all." The next letter touches a point destined to become later a matter of long controversy: "We are gradually coming to my original proposition, *viz.* : to simply engage

the men and not to care at all what they are doing besides our work. I assure you that is the best thing we can do, and if you have any confidence in my judgment, pray drop all conditions in the contract except those relating to our own welfare. I mean now the conditions of discipline, etc."

In July Mr. Henschel writes from Germany at great length, controverting a Boston "Transcript" critic, who had maintained that the Music Hall was too large for successful orchestra concerts, defending Henschel's own theory of "mixed programmes," and telling of his success in selecting the musical library for the Orchestra. "The money I have spent for the complete library will not exceed two hundred and fifty pounds, but it will be one of the finest and most complete libraries in existence."¹ Less than forty years afterward, the value of the Symphony Orchestra Library was estimated at \$100,000! In later letters of that summer Mr. Henschel describes the exact height of the conductor's platform, the probable cost of the coming season's soloists, and answers suggestions that Mr. Higginson had evidently made about programmes. "2. 'Nicht zu viel Wagner.' Be sure I will always remember, as you say, what different people need. I spent a most delightful three days with Brahms near Vienna. He was delighted with the catalogue of our library and the idea of our giving lighter music in the second part of the concert."

Mr. Higginson's letters to Mr. Henschel, throughout his engagement, are tactful, friendly, and generous.

During the last winter of Mr. Henschel's engagement Mr.

¹ Mr. Henschel's list of the year 1881 is subjoined, for the benefit of music-lovers of the present day: "The catalogue is now complete and contains over 50 symphonies, 80 overtures and 90 miscellaneous works, — the names of the best representatives of the German, French, Italian, Hungarian, Bohemian, Danish, English and Russian schools, namely: Abert, Adam, Auber, J. S. Bach, Ph. E. Bach, Bargiel, Beethoven, Bennett, Berlioz, Boieldieu, Boccherini, Brahms, Bruch, Cherubini, Delibes, Dvořák, Gade, Glinka, Glück, Goldmark, Gounod, Grammann, Grimm, Handel, Haydn, Hérold, Hiller, Lachner, Lully, Liszt, Méhul, Massenet, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Monsigny, Mozart, Raff, Reinecke, Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Schumann, Söderman, Spohr, Spontini, Tchaikowsky, Volkmann, Wagner, and Weber."

Higginson was in Europe. He had gone over in June, 1883, with his wife and son, intending to stay a year, partly for business, partly for a holiday, — which he scarcely succeeded in getting, — and partly to secure a conductor to succeed Henschel. But the year was a troubled one. His wife and son fell ill; business obligations pressed him hard, and the negotiations for a conductor proved difficult. In October he was in Vienna, consulting with Epstein about the relative merits of Richter, Gericke, and Nikisch, and making the personal acquaintance of these artists. The negotiations dragged along. In December he wrote his father about Wagner operas: —

The whole list of these (except the last) has been given, and I've heard them all as a matter of education. They're very exhausting from their noise, length, and intricacy in form and in structure. They appeal far too much to the senses of various kinds, and I'm very glad they are past. The scenic effects are beyond belief, and the work of conductor [Richter and Gericke], Orchestra and singers is wonderful.

By January, 1884, he was in London, worried about the market. He writes to his father: —

I was going to ask you to sell some of your Calumet shares: 2300 is a great many, and good as they are, how can anyone tell to what price copper will go? I fear the market always. Don't you? Don't you also fear the upset likely to be caused by a low tariff, which has *got to come*? It may be sooner or later, but come it will. It will bother cotton and woolen goods and iron at least, and so it will bother our railroad. I'm glad to hear of the dividend on preferred shares, but I wish you would sell some of your stock, and I never could understand why you chose to keep so much. It looked clear to me that it must go down, but then I see wrong about six times in seven. I'm awfully perplexed by the whole situation.

Two days later he wrote to his wife, who was still in Vienna: "Our markets at home are as bad as I ever saw them — everyone selling right and left. It is simply cussed." On February 5: "Father writes me that I ought to go home and now Uncle H. and George Lee telegraph me the same. What can I do but go? And what will you do?" But a month went by before he could sail, and a few sentences from his letters to Mrs. Higginson give pleasanter pictures of his interests in London.

Harry James came in for a chat this noon. He is a good chap and agreeable. — Gordon reaches Khartoum in a day or two, and is very hopeful. Thank Heaven we've no foreign policy. "Mind your own business" is a good rule for nations, until they've an orderly house to show. — Mr. Bryce has just called on me and found me out. He left a kind card offering services, and it is much from a member of Parliament just now. — [Clarence] King leaves this evening for Paris, so I shall be still more alone. — John Morley, late of the "Pall Mall," is taking a prominent part in the House and much is expected of him. But Chamberlain and Dilke are the coming men, who will be at the front when Gladstone leaves work.

But his farewell note, on March 8, 1884, breathes disappointment with his various endeavors: "I have tried to do the work of a large man, and I'm a small man." He reached home just in time to hear Henschel's last concert, and then plunged into his tasks at State Street. The low price of copper had forced Calumet and Hecla to pass its dividend for the first time, and there were many other business anxieties. He worked feverishly hard, amused himself when he could by planting trees at "Sunset Hill," — his Manchester estate, — and had some pleasant drives with his father. He wrote long letters to Gericke, the new conductor, about engaging musicians in Europe; and by the time Mrs. Higginson returned, late in the summer, he was in a more cheerful mood.

Mr. Gericke's first term of service as conductor¹ is admirably described by Mr. Howe, who prints the interesting accounts of it given by Mr. Gericke as well as by Mr. Higginson. They need not be repeated here. It is sufficient to quote the well-known words, "Gericke made our Orchestra." His training and temperament were precisely what was needed for the necessary task of rendering the Orchestra "both homogeneous and expert." His programme-making was criticized, — like that of every conductor, — and the changes which his love of perfection made in the personnel of the Orchestra gave rise to some hard feeling among the superseded musicians. Before his second season began, he brought no less than twenty new players from Europe, many of them destined to win great renown. The "Pop" concerts began in the spring of 1885. In 1887 came the first concerts of the Orchestra in New York, and the first trip to the West. Mr. Gericke's patience and competence had triumphed, and when his first engagement came to a close, in the spring of 1889, and his admirers presented him with an album in recognition of their gratitude, the veteran lover of music, Mr. J. S. Dwight, inscribed upon the fly-leaf: "To the Maker of the Boston Symphony Orchestra." Mr. Higginson's words, spoken at a farewell dinner to Mr. Gericke at the Tavern Club, are an eloquent summary of his services:² —

Coming from Vienna, whose very name rings with music, to our new country, he found an orchestra without the long-established traditions that are the very groundwork of artistic undertakings in Europe. The methods, the relations between leader and men, the general conditions were wholly new to him.

¹ For the convenience of the reader, the dates of the service of the various conductors of the Orchestra are given here: Henschel, 1881-1884; Gericke (first term), 1884-1889; Nikisch, 1889-1893; Paur, 1893-1898; Gericke (second term), 1898-1906; Muck (first term), 1906-1908; Fiedler, 1908-1912; Muck (second term), 1912-1918.

² Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

The musicians were no longer young; were of various nations and of various habits; the climate was trying; the hall was too large for fine musical effects. The circumstances, in many respects, were unfavorable to good results. But he did not abate his zeal. He worked early and late with absolute fidelity to his task. He exacted an amount of practice which his men found trying, but which they came to recognize as the only means of success. He gave his three weekly performances month by month and year by year, under trials and against obstacles, always feeling that, work as he would, he could not reach the excellence of which he dreamed, and for which he ached. After Mr. Gericke had trained his Orchestra so as to have it well in hand, he himself proposed to increase his work by giving additional concerts in other cities, in order to keep the musicians employed during a longer period of the year, and so secure for them more practice and more pay. In these cities he has steadily won fame for himself and for them, until now he is gladly welcomed East and West; and in New York and in Philadelphia his departure is deplored, as it is here. You have heard and will bear witness to the great results which he has achieved, and with which he has delighted his audiences, and you will not soon forget how the Orchestra under his hand has learned to soar and to sing — surely the highest praise.

Mr. Gericke's successor was Mr. Arthur Nikisch of Leipzig. He had been under consideration five years before, and the new negotiations with him were entrusted to Mr. Otto Dresel, a Boston musician of high standing. In a long letter of instructions to Mr. Dresel, October 8, 1888,¹ Mr. Higginson sets forth his views in an interesting fashion.

. . . Mr. Gericke does not look very well and is suffering from his nerves and from too much work in the past years. He exhausts himself very much with his work, and perhaps

¹ Mr. Howe prints a portion of this letter.

this is unavoidable for a thorough and conscientious artist. The men of the orchestra are naturally very trying, as you are aware, and musicians are made upon their own plan. About all this you know better than I do. Further than that, our climate is very trying to us, to foreigners, and more especially, as it would seem, to artists.

About Mr. Nikisch — I never had a doubt. In the first place, your opinion in such matters is very valuable. You were very clear and emphatic as to his artistic value. In the second place, I got a very full and very favorable account of him from friends in Vienna, on whose judgment I entirely rely. . . . I have no question that he can do the work — no doubt, if he is strong enough. . . . I am bound to say about Mr. Gericke that he has done all that he could do, and has worked very hard and very conscientiously at all times to carry out the ends in view. He never spares himself one moment. I never have exercised any supervision; I never have urged him, and I am not in a position to do so. You know very well that I am a busy man, and have many cares on my mind; that I must keep this orchestral matter before me, but I cannot give it much daily care or thought. I cannot go and see that the conductor is busy with his work day after day, week after week. Very often I do not go to a rehearsal for months at a time. That care I will not have on my mind, nor will I have any care or worry with regard to making the programmes or arrangements; nor will I undertake to engage any musicians. I have a manager who is an excellent fellow and has had some experience, and who, here and in other cities, makes all arrangements. He also makes the contracts, by reëngaging men when they expire, engages new men and discharges old men; but he does this at the bidding of the conductor of the orchestra. He has neither the experience nor the knowledge to enable him to look up new men, therefore to the conductor is left the whole artistic direction of the work and management. He must lay out his plans, of course make his programmes,

find new men if he loses the old ones, either by their going or by his dismissal of them for ill conduct or for want of ability. He must think beforehand and arrange as to the concerts in town and out of town; he must preserve discipline in the orchestra, which is a more difficult matter than on the other side. He is free and unfettered in all these matters, has no government officer, inspector or director to bother him. He is as free as a man can well be in this world — any man who has much work and considerable responsibilities on his shoulders. . . .

My contracts are very strong, indeed much stronger than European contracts usually are.¹ They have only been used for the good of the men as a body. If a man is so rude and so insubordinate that it cannot be borne at the rehearsals, and does not show any signs of improvement, he must be discharged, and can be under this contract. In short, I have the power, but have never used it, and shall not use it unless absolutely necessary. Of course, a man who makes a disturbance in a public meeting — being at a concert or any other meeting — in this country can be locked up, but nobody wants to lock up an offending violin or clarinet player. On these scores he need have no uneasiness. But I want to know whether I can rely on his conscientiousness and fidelity to his duties without a word from me; on his power to rule the men and keep the peace, and get such work as he needs out of them; and whether I can rely on his physical health and strength. Mr. Gericke was a pretty strong man and he has exhausted himself. He said on coming here that he had injured his health before by much hard work. He does not work as Thomas does, but I fancy few men can do so. It will not help Mr. Nikisch to come over here and fail from want of physical vigor. . . .

To sum up — the engagement would be for eight months of

¹ Section twelve of the Orchestra contract reads: "If said musician fails to play to the satisfaction of said Higginson, said Higginson may dismiss said musician from the Orchestra, paying his salary to the time of dismissal, and shall not be liable to pay him any compensation or damages for such dismissal."

the year, or less; the salary would be \$8000; the conductor has the sole artistic management of the concerts given; he is to rule the men; rehearse as often as he finds necessary; rehearse the choruses, if he wishes them for any concerts; to make the programmes; to engage the soloists; to look up and engage fresh musicians when needed, which will now rarely happen, if at all; to discharge men if he sees fit. Of course, this will be done with my assistance, if I can help him. He has sole power in all these matters. . . . You know the aims, objects and pecuniary results of all my musical experience here, and you know what the result has been. It is far enough from what I want to attain, but, at the same time, it has been something. It is a work with which I wish to go on as long as I can, and if it can be made to continue forever, which is my expectation, so much the better. I do not believe that there is any such engagement for a director of an orchestra in the world. . . . I want him to fully understand that, if he comes here, I must rely on him entirely, and I do not want to rely in vain, either on his will to do all that an artist may do to carry out my purposes, or on his strength to accomplish all this. Pray let him understand that I have never interfered with Mr. Gericke in his programmes or any of his arrangements, and shall not interfere with him. Whatever I may know of music, I do not know enough to meddle with that part. If he understands all these conditions and thinks he can carry these all out, *I should like to know it by cable.* . . .

Mr. Dresel's reply to Major Higginson's anxiety about Mr. Nikisch's health is amusing enough: —

" . . . He is not strongly built, but must have a pretty tough and wiry constitution, or else he would not be alive. In reply to my expressed anxiety about his physical strength, he said that more than once he had had to conduct four Wagner Operas in one week. Considering that it nearly kills *me* to *hear one* of the beastly things, I think conducting four of them

in one week, may be sufficient to prove *his* powers of endurance!!"

The delightful Mr. Nikisch arrived in due time, in spite of the objections of the Musicians' Protective Union on the ground that his "admission to the United States was a violation of the Contract Labor Law." This contention was not sustained, but it marked the beginning of the long struggle with the Union. Mr. Higginson never yielded ground. So far as the welfare of the Orchestra players was concerned, he saw "no use or need for the Union"; and in this position he was upheld by the great majority of lovers of music.¹

Mr. Nikisch has been characterized as a poet rather than a disciplinarian, and his temperament inclined him to "free-verse" renderings of his musical moods. The public liked him, and sorrowed over his sudden departure for Budapest in 1893. His correspondence with Mr. Higginson is most agreeable, except in their ultimate divergence of view with regard to the obligations imposed by Mr. Nikisch's contract.

The negotiations for a new conductor were placed in the hands of Major Higginson's friend O. W. Donner, who proceeded to Vienna to consult with Epstein and Gericke. The position was offered to the latter, but his health then seemed to forbid a second term of service. Richter was invited, and actually signed a contract, without, however, succeeding in securing a release from his Vienna contract. His correspondence on this point does not leave a favorable impression upon the mind of a layman. Then it looked for a time as if Schuck of Dresden might accept the position. Mr. Donner's letters and cablegrams, through this trying period, are an illuminating comment upon the psychology of musicians. "You told me at the time that artists were a '*queer lot*,' but in Richter's case

¹ "In keeping the Boston Symphony Orchestra independent and wholly devoted to art he has bestowed upon his fellow countrymen a gift more precious than valor on the battlefield." — W. J. Henderson in the *New York Sun*.

this is much too mild an expression." — "It is almost impossible to get any reliable information from impartial people. Impartiality is hard to find among artists. I have yet to meet the artist that does not consider *himself* far superior to any of the others."

Anxious Major Higginson, sitting in State Street, had a list of twenty-two possible European conductors; and as Mr. Donner's letters and cablegrams poured in, he checked off the characteristics of each candidate: "fairish," "inexperienced and talented," "pretty good," "no," "no use," "can't," "poor," "rough but goodish," "Richter recommended," etc. Ultimately the choice fell upon Emil Paur, who had been Nikisch's successor in the Stadt Theater at Leipzig.

Mr. Paur, after his first rehearsal in Boston, thought the Orchestra "the best in the world." Critics praised his "sincerity" and "robustness" and his hospitality to new musical ideas. "The Orchestra," wrote Mr. H. T. Parker in 1911, "had been primitive under Mr. Henschel; it had become expert under Mr. Gericke; it had turned romantic under Mr. Nikisch and Mr. Paur."¹

And now, in 1898, Mr. Gericke came back for eight more seasons. "Mr. Gericke, returning for a second term," says Mr. Parker, "restored the balance again. He abated not a whit his zeal for technical perfection, his exquisite sense of quality and euphony of tone. He was soon able to begin again with those proficiencies where he had ended, and to advance upon the refining and perfecting of them. He had only to make ready anew a familiar and sensitive instrument." Those were happy years for Mr. Higginson, in spite of his heavy responsibilities for the Orchestra and for many other undertakings. His relations with Mr. Gericke were cordial, and the Orchestra passed from triumph to triumph.

¹ "Thirty Years of the Boston Symphony Orchestra"; *Boston Transcript*, September 30, 1911.

A landmark in its history was the removal to the new Symphony Hall on Huntington Avenue, in 1900. The plans had been made seven years before, when the proposed opening of a new street threatened the destruction of the old building in Hamilton Place. A corporation had been formed to carry out the undertaking, and the generous subscription of over \$400,000 for shares indicated how completely the cause of music had won its way in Boston. But the cost of building had risen so rapidly by 1900 that more than three quarters of a million was necessary. The directors mortgaged the hall, and leased it to Mr. Higginson, who agreed to "meet costs of administration, taxes and all charges, and to pay to the stockholders the rest of the receipts." As a matter of fact, there has never been any profit for the stockholders, and Mr. Higginson quietly added the large annual deficit from the Symphony Hall to the regular and expected deficit upon the Orchestra. But the building was wonderfully well adapted to its purposes, as the Inaugural Concert proved; and Major Higginson's address at the ceremonies gave the public an opportunity to manifest their sense of gratitude and pride. Indeed, there had been few of the letters enclosing subscriptions for shares that had not expressed the warmest personal feeling toward the initiator and sustainer of the Orchestra.

The establishment of the Pension Fund in 1903 gave the players an additional sense of security for the future. The Musicians Union was sleepless in its hostility. "I do not wish to fight the union," wrote Major Higginson to Mr. Gericke, "but if the union wishes to fight our orchestra, it must fight me, and I am ready." He did not hesitate to write and speak plainly to Gericke about the burden he himself was carrying. In 1898: "The load is heavy and does not grow lighter, as I grow older and less able to work. You will not work for money when you are of my age [64], and you will never work so hard as I do now and must work for ten years more." In 1901: "It has cost me great anxiety and pain in the bad years when I

was losing much money and could not be sure of keeping the concerts." With characteristic energy, however, he urges Gericke in 1903 to go to Europe to secure new players: "Go to-morrow or the next day. Don't wait until next week; go this week. Get right at the matter; finish it as fast and as well as you can. . . . I have a great many things to do, but, if necessary, I could sail for Europe to-morrow." Sometimes he paid Gericke the compliment of writing him in German, after a particularly fine concert: —

VEREHRTER HERR KAPPELLMEISTER: —

Musterhaft! Reizend! Edel! Vollkommen! und noch mehr wenn ich nur die Worte hätte!

Or this (February 25, 1906), after a noble rendering of the Freischütz overture: —

VEREHRTER HERR KAPPELLMEISTER: —

"Freischütz" kenne ich vom Anfange bis zum Ende, und ich habe die Overtüre sehr lieb, aber nie wie gestern — nicht sogar in Wien — habe ich sie gehört. Jede Note, jede Phrase — alles. Das Blut ist mir in Kopf gestiegen und ich wollte nicht sprechen.

High-water mark!!!

Here is a letter written to comfort the distressed conductor after a small audience: —

April 14, 1904.

MY DEAR MR. GERICKE: —

I understand very well that you should have been much annoyed and mortified by the small house to hear the Ninth Symphony, but I want you also to understand the position of other people. Did you notice that we had hardly a friend in the hall? Your especial friends and admirers, as well as ours, were busy with other things and could not go.

My own life is an example of the lives of others. Yesterday morning I went to work at a quarter past eight o'clock; was very busy until two o'clock, when I went to Concord, twenty miles away, to the funeral of a dear friend. I arrived home at half-past six; could not even get the nap which I am ordered to take; got my dinner and went to the concert. I have a very strong liking for the Ninth Symphony, but last night I should have gone to bed at 8 o'clock if it had not been for you and the Orchestra.

This morning I went to work at half-past eight and shall be busy steadily until seven o'clock to-night, with one care or another. I have two business meetings after I leave the office to-day.

Plenty of other people work just as much as I do, are just as full of cares and are just as tired. I would give a week's earnings to go to bed this very hour, but I cannot do it. The men are very busy, and the women are full of engagements and duties and are very busy. . . .

Now, I know better than anybody else that you have deserved every bit that you have got, that you have earned all the reputation and the applause which have been given to you; but I also know that other people have worked just as hard as you and have failed to get these returns. They have been well paid neither in money nor in praise. Everybody must suffer from disappointment. I have been very busy with an especial and very important matter of business for some months, have traveled a great many miles to carry it out, have worked very hard; and I failed absolutely yesterday. It is a much greater disappointment and loss to me than you have had since you have been in this country, but there is no use in complaining about it. It made me very tired and very cross yesterday, and you no doubt noticed both these things and suffered from them. . . .

Dear Mr. Gericke, don't think that I am ignorant of your feelings as an artist and a man last night. I wish to present

to you the fact that we are all mortal, that we cannot always succeed. . . .

I think you have got more and had fewer disappointments as an artist than any man I know, and I am very glad of it.

With kind regards to Mrs. Gericke (to whom I was very cross) and to you (to whom I was crosser), I am,

Very truly yours,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

[Penned postscript.] Please read this note patiently. It is written in the kindest spirit to you. *Glück auf!*

It was not conductors alone who needed occasional comforting and admonition. There were jealousies among the players, and lapses of various sorts.¹ Some of these masters of heavenly music drank at times, and played a certain card game invented for cooler nerves than most artists possess. To a friend who suggested that a committee might relieve him of some of his personal responsibilities for the Orchestra, and that ladies might be asked to serve upon this committee, Mr. Higginson replied: "No woman would wish to reprove a man for drinking or gambling, or listen to foolish love-affairs — all of which comes to a showman." Forchanded artists asked him to invest their money for them, and the impecunious or ill knew that Major Higginson had a soft heart. Sometimes he groaned: "If the world consisted only of musicians, it would go to pieces at once."

But Mr. Higginson's personal relations with musicians brought him pleasures which far outweighed the annoyances. Many of the distinguished artists of the Orchestra became his warm friends. All of the conductors, from Henschel to Fiedler, delighted to arrange musical evenings for the Higginsons at 191 Commonwealth Avenue. Mr. Kneisel and Mr. Longy brought their quartettes for chamber music, and famous pianists and

¹ "Every now and then a man would be very insolent, which lasted about five minutes." — H. L. H.

soloists played and sang. Expressions of appreciation of Mr. Higginson's services to the musical public kept pouring in upon him; and in spite of his New England shyness in the presence of open praise, he was deeply gratified. In 1906, for instance, many of his friends united in subscribing for a portrait bust by St. Gaudens to be set up in Symphony Hall. The following letter from Mrs. George Tyson, the chairman of the committee, explains their purpose:—

May 10, 1906.

DEAR MR. HIGGINSON:—

We, the undersigned, are moved to express our deep appreciation of your generosity, courage and patience in the inception and continuance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which has for twenty-five years given joy and education to thousands. But above and beyond this has been the force of your example, which we believe has permanently raised the quality of citizenship in our Commonwealth. We therefore ask that you will consent to sit to the sculptor, St. Gaudens, for a portrait to be placed in some permanent position, that the example of your life may serve as an enduring inspiration to your fellow citizens.

To this Mr. Higginson replied:—

May 11, 1906.

Your letter has moved us both deeply, and we are very grateful for the high honor offered to me. The work of the Orchestra has been made light by the never-failing sympathy of friends and of a great, generous public, an immense encouragement to us. We all hold the creed that our national home is what we make it, and that by joint work we can make it beautiful and happy. The part which has fallen to me is no less a duty than a joy, indeed a necessity to myself. Will you say to your Committee that I thank each and all of them heart-

ily for their kindness in the past and present, and for this fresh, graceful expression of their sympathy and confidence in my work and life. It pleases us both that Mr. St. Gaudens is chosen to make the portrait.

The sculptor's ill-health prevented his execution of the task, and it was finally entrusted to the accomplished hands of Bela Pratt. His noble bronze, completed in 1911, perpetuates the friendship and gratitude felt by a whole community.

Mr. Higginson cherished, likewise, the hundreds of letters from music-lovers quite unknown to him, telling of their indebtedness to his generosity. One must here suffice.

MY DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON: —

As I graduate from the Rehearsal rush-line to the proud and happy possession of a subscriber's ticket, I beg you to let me thank you for the great privilege the Rehearsal line is to many.

For seven years, in rough and pleasant weather, I, with 500 other beneficiaries, have rejoiced in the music so generously placed within our reach.

Dropping the quarter into the open palm I always felt a deep gratitude to Major Higginson, and bounded up the stairs, to forget everything in the re-creating power of that marvelous orchestra's universal language, which to lonely and homesick people is tonic and consolation.

The Symphony waiting line is unique. There you see people from all over this vast country, young and old, many music students, making the sacrifice of the whole day and studying while they wait. Often the blind come. One day I stood beside a young Italian violin teacher, who had brought three little girl pupils, eager, dark-eyed children, doubtless talented, and recruited from the crowded quarter of Boston. We fell to talking about instruments, of Mr. Ferir's viola, a Gasparo da Salo; and this man had come from that part of Italy and knew the history of that famous worker so long ago.

Then the excitement of not knowing whether you'll get in and the joy of a seat if you do; and the brilliancy of the music from the second balcony. Oh! it's Paradise! and I'm not sure but some of the best critics sit there too, to say nothing of their enthusiasm and appreciation, and the neighborliness of dividing your bread and butter and apple with the fellow next, if he hasn't any, and the profitable and pleasant chats it often leads to.

Early in 1906, there was a friendly difference of opinion between Mr. Higginson and Mr. Gericke with regard to the terms for renewing their contract, and the conductor decided to resign. Mr. Higginson's letter to him is impeccable: —

BOSTON, *February 18, 1906.*

DEAR MR. GERICKE: —

Your pleasant note of to-day has just come, and does not surprise me, as your wish for a quiet life and for a return to your own home is strong.

I am very sorry for your decision, and have yielded what seemed possible in order to get a different reply from you, for your decision ends a long and fine service to the Orchestra and to us all. But I accept your reply as wise, and in the kindly spirit, and I think with pleasure and gratitude of the concerts during this season as the finest in our experience.

They will leave a noble memory. May I thank you heartily for your brilliant and arduous work in making an orchestra, and for the ripe, beautiful results which the Orchestra has given us.

I am with great respect,

Very truly yours,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

Gericke, as well as I [wrote Mr. Higginson in 1911], had been much disappointed at the leaving of Kneisel with his quartette and at the loss of Martin Loeffler, who was a ripe

musician of great skill with his violin and of much power as a composer. The loss of all these men at one time was severe, but we filled their places with men from Europe and elsewhere, and put at first Arbos as concert-master, and then, after a year, put Willy Hess in that position. Hess was an admirable concert-master and soloist, and made also a pretty good quartette. Arbos was a charming man and artist, but he did not like the position of concert-master.

When it was decided that Mr. Gericke should go, Mr. Ellis went to Europe to see whom he could engage, talked with various musicians, and eventually made a bargain with Dr. Karl Muck, who at that time was at the Opera in Berlin. It seemed doubtful for many weeks whether he could come; but at last the Emperor of Germany, who had a particular liking for Dr. Muck, agreed that he should come to us for a year. . . .

Dr. Muck was in a way like Mr. Gericke, — a man of distinguished taste and skill and inspiration, — a very noble conductor. During the year, as we much wanted to keep him for a second year, the request was preferred to the Emperor, and he granted us the privilege.

The engagement of Dr. Muck was considered a most brilliant stroke of fortune. Born in Darmstadt in 1859, and educated at the universities of Leipzig and Heidelberg, he had risen to the very head of his profession as conductor of the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Mr. Higginson had long had him under consideration, and in various visits to Europe had watched his conducting with care. The German Emperor's consent to Dr. Muck's American engagement was obtained with difficulty.¹ From his first concert in Boston Dr. Muck's artistic distinction was fully recognized. Mr. Higginson wrote thus to his wife (October 16, 1906) of the success of the opening

¹ "In an interview soon after his arrival in America, Dr. Muck attributed this consent entirely to the Emperor's regard for Americans, especially for Harvard University, with which Mr. Higginson was known to be closely associated." — Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

concert: "Muck's security in his orchestra was shown by his cessation of beating time for some minutes, tho' the Orchestra felt him all the time. The men and he are mutually content — and happy over it. It was a very fine, delicate, artistic concert."

As Mr. Parker wrote in 1911:¹ —

"A perfected instrument awaited him; he appreciated, respected, preserved its perfections. He could hardly refine upon the technique in which Mr. Gericke had schooled the band or upon the tonal quality, to which his ear was almost as sensitive as had been Mr. Gericke's own. He could, however, begin where Mr. Gericke ended, in the broadening of the eloquence and in the heightening of the accent of his orchestral voices. The technique and tonal perfections were, so to say, fixed qualities, and in them and through them Dr. Muck sought and attained a diversity of characterizing eloquence. In him was and is the discriminating, the responsive, and to disclose the individuality of each composer, of each composition that he played. He made his orchestra as discerning and as characterizing, as responsively eloquent. . . ."

High diplomacy was utilized in order to persuade the Emperor to extend Dr. Muck's leave of absence for a second year. Major Higginson sent a personal letter, which Senator Lodge declared "wholly admirable. I would not change a word." The Secretary of State, Elihu Root, asked our Ambassador in Berlin, Charlemagne Tower, to use his influence.

"I have pleasure in informing you," wrote Mr. Tower on March 7, 1907, to Senator Lodge, "that I have had a conversation with the Emperor in which he announced to me that he has decided to grant to Dr. Muck a leave of absence for one year more, in order that he may remain during that time in Boston. The Emperor said that he cannot well dispense with the services of Dr. Muck as director of his own orchestra here, though he recognizes the great service which Colonel Higgin-

¹ *Boston Transcript*, Sept. 30, 1911.

son has rendered in maintaining the standard of good music in America, and he is willing to assist him in his efforts in that direction by complying with his request that Dr. Muck may remain one more year. The Emperor added, however, that he cannot extend Dr. Muck's leave of absence beyond that period, but that, if he should decide to remain for a longer time absent from Germany, he would have to resign his position as director here."

Upon Dr. Muck's return to Berlin in 1908, Mr. Max Fiedler of Hamburg succeeded to the conductorship of the Orchestra. He proved a great favorite with the general public, both in his programme-making, and in his personal vigor and enthusiasm. After "the four happiest years of his life," he handed back the bâton to Dr. Muck, who began his second term of service in 1912, and continued it until 1918.

Every reader of these pages is aware of the bitterness and the tragedy associated with the name of Dr. Muck during our war with Germany. That must be touched upon in a later chapter, but it should not be allowed now to obliterate the happier memory of his achievement through many unclouded seasons. Even after the World War had for nearly two years awakened every latent racial and nationalistic animosity, Philip Hale, the distinguished critic, could thus describe Dr. Muck and the Orchestra:—

"These concerts in Boston are so remarkable, they have been so remarkable under the leadership of Dr. Muck, that they are now taken by too many as a matter of course. For the Boston Symphony Orchestra is not merely one that contains certain accomplished virtuosos; the orchestra is a virtuoso. It is an instrument which, having been brought to a state of perfect mechanism by Dr. Muck, responds to his imaginative and poetic wishes. He stands there calm, undemonstrative, graceful, elegant, aristocratic; a man of singularly commanding and magnetic personality even in repose. The orchestra is his speech, the expression of the composer's music as it appeals to

the conductor's brain, heart and soul. It is now hardly possible to think of this Orchestra without the vision of Dr. Muck at its head as the interpreter of beauty and brilliance. Fortunate, thrice fortunate, is he in having at his command this Orchestra, largely his own creation; wholly the superb interpreter of composers as he understands them, as he shares in their own emotions, confessions, declarations, griefs and longings."¹

In the autumn of 1918, after the storm still to be described was over, and Major Higginson had ceased his connection with the Orchestra, several thousand persons signed a testimonial written by President Eliot for presentation to Major Higginson upon his eighty-fourth birthday. The two men were born in the same year, 1834, and they had been comrades in many a great cause. No close for the Orchestra chapter of Major Higginson's life could be more serenely perfect than this letter:² —

CAMBRIDGE, 31 Oct., 1918.

DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON: —

Some of the thousands of persons who have had their lives made more interesting and happier by the concerts of your Symphony Orchestra in Boston and its vicinity during the past thirty-seven years wish to declare to you on your eighty-fourth birthday their personal gratitude and their strong sense of the public benefits which have resulted and will result from your disinterested and patient labors on behalf of the Orchestra and the community it has served. Many of the signers of this Memorial are acquaintances who have long cherished high respect for you and your generous works, or friends, old and young, who feel for you the sincerest affection; but most of them are strangers, who gladly embrace this their first opportunity to tell you directly that you have gladdened and exalted their physical and spiritual lives.

Boston was historically the right place in the United States

¹ *Boston Herald*, May 7, 1916.

² Mr. Higginson's reply to the letter is printed in chapter xiv.

to develop an orchestra of high merit. The soil in which you planted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1880-81 had been well prepared during the forty years preceding by a series of earlier organizations for providing orchestral concerts in the community where you and I grew up. These pioneering organizations were the Boston Academy of Music, the Musical Fund Society, the Germania Orchestra, the Philharmonic Society, and the Harvard Musical Association. Their resources were limited, and their achievements modest; but they made ready a supporting public for you. Your purpose was to create an Orchestra out of the best available material in all the world competent to render to perfection the best music in the world. In this very difficult undertaking your success has been marvelous. Your plans and policies have been wise and generous toward both your public and the artists whom you employed. Your Orchestra has given year by year a demonstration of the exceeding value of coöperative discipline. You have steadily insisted that the skilled musician's occupation is not a mechanical trade but an artistic profession. You have given your public the pure, refining, exalting, inspiring music of all nations and all periods. You have enlarged and strengthened the appreciation of sweet and noble music in this community.

We shall all better appreciate the work you have done for Boston and the country, if we bear in mind that good music sustains and consoles the human spirit in times of adversity, and is, next to good literature, the best expression of public prosperity, social joy, and religious transport. It transcends the limits of language or race, requires no versions or translations, and ranges freely through all the civilized world and the successive generations of men. Your success in creating the Symphony Orchestra as a permanent institution will have a high educational value in the future; for common enjoyment of immortal music allied with immortal poetry will prove an exalting and binding influence among the various elements of the American population.

On behalf of the signers of this Memorial, I greet you and Mrs. Higginson with heartiest congratulations on the principal work of your useful life, warmest thanks, and best wishes for your enjoyment of serene content as you look backward, and still more as you look forward.

Your old friend

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

To receive such a letter as that — and to deserve it — may surely be counted among the durable satisfactions of life.

CHAPTER XI

THE FRIEND OF THE COLLEGE

HENRICUM LEE HIGGINSON, virum egregium, cuius munificentia cum civibus suis summam voluptatem attulit, tum hanc universitatem auxit sæpius et ornavit, *Artium Magistrum*. — PRESIDENT ELIOT, on presenting H. L. H. for the honorary degree of A.M. in 1882.

That you have found the College work the pleasantest of your life is a delight to me, and a good omen for the future of the University. . . . The things at Cambridge to which you have given largely are fundamental — playgrounds and the Union, both pleasure-giving, wholesome, and democratic. I suppose you know that for years you have been to Harvard students the type of the public-spirited, independent, generous American citizen, who "looks forward and not backward and lends a hand." I hope you and Mrs. Higginson thoroughly enjoy this reputation of yours. It corresponds accurately to the facts of your life. — PRESIDENT ELIOT to H. L. H., May 22, 1909.

He was the friend of all men — his immediate circle, his city, his state, his college, his country, all of which he saw in terms of mankind. His relation with every one of these units was a personal relation, the relation of a friend. It was primarily as a friend that he bestowed upon Harvard the great benefactions which his ability, industry, and self-sacrifice empowered him to make. — *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, November 20, 1919.

IN the decade of 1880–1890, as we have seen, the chief event in Henry Higginson's public life was the founding of the Symphony Orchestra. In the following decade, 1890–1900, he became known as a munificent benefactor of Harvard, a member of its Corporation, and a man deeply concerned with the relations of the American college to the American Commonwealth. This aspect of his life will be surveyed in the present chapter. The succeeding chapters will deal with some of his friendships, tastes, opinions, and the various activities which gave him his unique position as a "useful citizen," particularly from 1900 to the celebration of his 80th birthday in 1914. The final chapter will discuss what is in some respects the most dramatic and picturesque phase of his whole career — the epoch of the World War.

As we now pass from the decade that witnessed the birth of the Orchestra to the decade peculiarly identified with Major Higginson's work for Harvard, we must pause to note the death of George Higginson, on April 27, 1889.¹ "Your father," wrote William James, "was one of the very earliest elder figures whom I can remember in Boston; and the impression he always gave me, of ruggedness and masculinity with modesty and kindness, was altogether unique." Charles Francis Adams wrote: "He was honest, straightforward, single-minded. He had a hard fight of it through much of his life, but he won his battle and made a success of it. Finally he retired, carrying with him the respect and kindly regard of everyone. I don't well see what any man can ask for more." — "A high-minded, simple, courageous man," wrote Henry Cabot Lodge, "honest with an aggressive honesty none too common, generous and patriotic. It is a deep satisfaction to feel that I have known him, and that I had the honor to be his kinsman and friend." A letter of condolence from Dr. Vincent Y. Bowditch made a reference to George Higginson's Puritanism. "When I hear sneers at the Puritanism of Boston, your dear old father's face is one of a few that come up to me to put such sneers to shame and make one wish that *such* 'Puritanism' could be spread far and wide."

Henry Higginson's reply was most characteristic: —

BOSTON, *April* 30, '89.

MY DEAR BOY: —

You are very kind to think of us in trouble, tho' you can't help it by nature, and very kind to say pleasant words of father. The loss and the pain is evident, and perhaps this other feeling too. As I sat with him in the last days and nights, the thought came to me again and again, that a return to health would be very short-lived, and of doubtful vigor, —

¹ The memory of the gallant, old-school gentleman is now perpetuated by the George Higginson Professorship of Physiology at Harvard, endowed by his children.

and then another illness and suffering perhaps, — and I half hoped that he would die *then* quietly — without pain and after a very happy winter. He was a man without great talents, but of a great gift for goodness, which he cultivated vigorously, — and when your father comes to die, you and others will prize the same qualities in him even more highly than his fame. . . . Puritanism! The older I grow, the more I incline to their ideal — and the luxury and the wastefulness and a thousand things send me that way — in thought — tho' hardly in deeds or living perhaps. Let no one sneer at ideals or enthusiasms.

Henry Higginson's loyalty to Harvard ran back to his boyhood. It was affected in no way by the fact that his own college course had ended before Christmas of his Freshman year. In some of his earliest letters from Europe he had reprehended the example of a rich Bostonian who had died without leaving anything to "the college." Out of his own slender income, in 1860, he had purchased books in Vienna for the Harvard Library. In September, 1868, the year before Charles W. Eliot became President, Major Higginson had written to his wife: "Your mother discoursed about the poverty of the University and said that not improbably the salaries of the Professors would not be paid in full this year. Oh! if some dozen men would only put it up high and dry above want! One million dollars to start with and three million more afterward."

He had married the daughter of one of the most famous of Harvard professors. Mrs. Louis Agassiz's name led the list of Cambridge ladies who, in 1879, organized that "Private Collegiate Instruction for Women" which marked the first definite step toward the founding of Radcliffe College. This undertaking may fairly be considered an outgrowth of the Agassiz School on Quincy Street. "But for the school," wrote Mrs. Agassiz late in life, "the college (so far as I am concerned)

would never have existed." When "The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women" was formed in May, 1882, Major Higginson's name appears as one of the signers of the Articles of Association. When Radcliffe College was finally incorporated in 1894, he became an "Associate," or member of the governing board. He served in this capacity until 1906, and from 1894 until 1905 he acted also as Treasurer. As a matter of fact, then, Major Higginson's "affectionate and incalculable service"¹ to Radcliffe — a service induced by his loyalty to Mrs. Agassiz as well as by his interest in the higher education for women — began much earlier than his official relations with Harvard.

His first — and only — degree from Harvard was conferred in 1882, after the first season of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

"It is a strange thing," says President Eliot, "that Major Higginson was never given any degree from Harvard University till he was nearly fifty years of age. That was a degree of Master of Arts, an honorary degree. Stranger still, considering that he was one of the most beloved men in the whole generation of Harvard graduates and benefactors between 1861 and 1893, he was never elected to the Board of Overseers. I cannot recall now any reason for this curious omission; but it is a fact that he was never even presented to the electors as a candidate for their votes. I find it impossible to explain this anomaly."²

But Henry Higginson was never a man to stand upon ceremony, or to wait for official sanctions, when he saw an opportunity for rendering service. Long before he became a member of the Harvard Corporation, he had begun to solicit funds for the College. Here is an admirable begging letter, addressed to a kinsman, in March, 1886: —

¹ *Elisabeth Cary Agassiz: a Biography*, by Lucy Allen Paton (Boston, 1919), p. 208.

² Address at the Memorial meeting in the Harvard Union, Nov. 17, 1919.

DEAR X: —

Nobody knows his duties better than yourself — therefore I presume to admonish you. I want you, as the oldest and richest member of your family and mine, to give to the College \$100,000, to be used in any way which seems best to you.

My reasons are that you, a public-spirited and educated gentleman, owe it to yourself, to your country, and to the Republic. How else are we to save our country if not by education in all ways and on all sides? What can we do so useful to the human race in every aspect? It is wasting your time to read such platitudes.

Democracy has got fast hold of the world, and *will* rule. Let us see that she does it more wisely and more humanly than the kings and nobles have done! Our chance is *now* — before the country is full and the struggle for bread becomes intense and bitter.

Educate, and save ourselves and our families and our money from mobs!

I would have the gentlemen of this country lead the new men, who are trying to become gentlemen, in their gifts and in their efforts to promote education.

We have a neighbor who gives very freely, and whom you rightly do not respect. Stand before him in all ways. I shall be sorry to see his name down for \$100,000 before yours. It gives a certain power to give this money, and will give you great pleasure. Think how easily it has come. Give one fourth of your last year, and count it money potted down for quiet good.

One gentleman has just given \$115,000, who cannot spare it so well as you, and whom people do not accredit with such generosity. B—— is not so rich a man as is supposed, and cannot afford to do more than you. If I were to name two men who have helped nobly, you would stare.

Kindly send your name to Edward Hooper to-morrow A.M.

for the \$100,000. I *know* that you will enjoy it much more than you will by keeping it. Never mind any reasons now. You and yours are too far on to mind them. . . .

Gratify me, and gratify yourself and your wife and children. Not a thought, not a doubt. Do it!

The earliest of Major Higginson's notable benefactions to Harvard was the gift, in 1890, of Soldiers Field, the great playground south of the Charles River, where the Stadium now stands. On May 14, 1890, he had written to his wife from New York: "The purchase of land is made, and is certainly a boon to the College. I hope that you approve, and know that some day you'll be glad of it. All your family have done something for the College, and I ought to, and the memorial is worth while, too." In passing the deeds to the President and Fellows on June 5, Major Higginson wrote: —

The gift is absolutely without condition of any kind. The only other wish on my part is, that the ground shall be called The Soldier's Field¹ — and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends, alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen, who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the war of 1861 to 1865, in defence of the Republic.

JAMES SAVAGE, JR.
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL
EDWARD BARRY DALTON
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL
ROBERT GOULD SHAW

¹ This is the form of words used in the official pamphlet published by the University in 1890, containing Major Higginson's address. In republishing the address in 1902, he used the form, "The Soldiers' Field." The common usage at Cambridge, however, is "Soldiers Field." See the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* for Jan. 1, 1920.

This is only a wish and not a condition — and, moreover, it is a happiness to me to serve in any way the College which has done so much for us all.

He had already consulted his friend James Russell Lowell, then an old man ending his days at Elmwood, about an appropriate inscription. Lowell's letter follows: —

ELMWOOD, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

24th May, 1890.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

You were a good boy, are a good man, and are always doing good things. But you lay a hard thing upon me, for there is no writing so full of pitfalls as an inscription.

I know your modesty will hesitate, but I think this is a case where the memorial will lose in meaning if your name be not associated with it. Should the inscription be in Latin or English? I think it should be in English. How would something like this do? or something like it?

"TO THE HAPPY MEMORY
of

FRIENDS, COMRADES, KINSMEN, who died for
their country, this field is dedicated by
H. H.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There comes a voice without reply,
'T is man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die."

It would n't be well to mingle Latin with English, and these verses of Emerson are nobly fitting for the purpose.

Throw this into your waste-paper-basket if you don't like it.

I quote E. from memory and the verses should be compared with the text.¹ With love to your wife,

Affectionately yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

Major Higginson's address to the Harvard students, explaining the purpose of his gift, was on the evening of June 10. "It may interest you to know," he wrote to Colonel Henry Lee, "that I am asked by Dr. Walcott and others to say a few words to the students about this playground, and that I am to do so next Tuesday evening at 7½ o'clock, Sever Hall or Building. It is not much that I am to say, but I'll try to interest them."

Equally modest were the arrangements made by Harvard for his reception. Professor John Williams White, the Chairman of the Athletic Committee, wrote on June 9: "I called a hundred of the fellows together, and told them briefly that you had given us the field and that you would come out tomorrow evening and talk to us about it. I thought it better

¹ Lowell's memory was only slightly at fault. The inscription as it now stands upon the stone in front of the Locker Building north of the Stadium is as follows:—

To the
Happy Memory
of

JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,
ROBERT GOULD SHAW,
Friends, Comrades, Kinsmen,
Who Died for Their Country,
This Field is Dedicated by
Henry Lee Higginson.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,—
'T is man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die."



THE ARMY FRIENDS COMMEMORATED BY SOLDIERS FIELD

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Stephen G. Perkins | |
| Robert Gould Shaw | | Charles Russell Lowell |
| | James J. Lowell | |
| Edward B. Dalton | | James Savage |

to tell some of the fellows just the day before your talk, and have them tell the others, than to put up posters announcing the meeting." Professor White also asked about a hundred men, students and faculty, to meet Major Higginson at his house after the conclusion of the brief exercises.

I cannot discover that Major Higginson had ever made a speech in his life, except in that negro church at Cottonham, Georgia, and in the friendly intimacy of the Tavern Club. He did not understand that ladies could be admitted to Sever Hall, and did not ask Mrs. Higginson to accompany him, though he did take his fourteen-year-old son. About four hundred men crowded into "Sever 11." President Eliot spoke briefly, in acceptance of the gift, and then came the address thus characterized by J. T. Morse: "As an utterance of deep feeling, made more intense by restrained expression, it is not surpassed in English literature. In form and substance it is beyond criticism. Hereafter the Major spoke on other occasions . . . and always with eloquence, beauty and feeling; but he never again quite reached the level of this address."¹

The men who listened to it were greatly moved.

"After your husband's words to-night," wrote Charles Eliot Norton to Mrs. Higginson, "I was not in the mood to go to Mr. White's, so I thanked Henry for what he had said, and came home to tell you of the great service he has rendered in speaking as he did. You know what he said; it was said with such directness, simplicity, sincerity, and with such manly emotion as to be deeply impressive. It touched the heart."

Another auditor — no less fastidious than Norton — was William James.

95 IRVING ST., June 11.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I could n't shake hands wi' you last night at Sever Hall, and was not asked to meet you at White's. But you can guess how I felt. To their dying day those men will remember your noble and simple appearance before them and the words you spoke.

¹ The Soldiers Field Address is printed as an appendix to this volume.

The best thing about this university is the chance these fellows get of meeting one man after another in Sever Hall who stands for something in the world outside, and who gives them a glimpse of an example and makes one of those personal impressions that abide. I'm sure you hit the mark last night. And I'm sure the field will do all the good, and more than all the good, you can possibly hope from it.

Yours ever,

WM. JAMES.

No answer called for!

An answer came, however, and James wrote a second note:—

TAMWORTH IRON WORKS, N.H., *June 20.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

I never expected a reply; but since you have written, I will, at the risk of appearing an ass, write an additional word myself. Which is that in the *after-taste* your speech looms more and more gigantic, or, seriously speaking, that it seems a more unique and impressive thing than ever. It entered into no cut-and-dried literary category, but was the expression of your own personal character and nothing else; and its simplicity and originality will make it stick in those boys as long as they live. I hear everyone else speak of it in the same way, as most impressive. Now don't reply to *this!*

Yours ever

W. J.

Colonel Henry Lee wrote exultingly to Mrs. Higginson:—

"The Bible says that a man shall leave father and mother and cling to his wife, and *vice-versa*, the wife to the husband. And yet you were absent on the great occasion of Henry's life; for let him live to the age of Methuselah, he will never combine the making and the presenting a gift so happily. The nature of the gift, its most felicitous name suggested by you, its touching simplicity, and in consequence, beauty—it was

all perfect, and you of all beings should have been there to weep and to exult.

"I sent you all the papers giving any account of the presentation, that you might select the best and bind them up with Henry's letter and speech and President Eliot's introduction."

Lowell, too infirm to attend the meeting in Sever Hall, wrote from Elmwood: —

11 June, 1890.

DEAR HENRY: —

Your speech gave me a pleasure which I should call unqualified, but for the *amari aliquid* which memory flavored it with. It was simple, strong, tender — manly in short, and just what it should be. How pleased Ida must have been!

Yours always

J. R. LOWELL.

Mr. Higginson, in his modesty, was at first reluctant to allow the College to reprint the address. He writes to his wife on June 20: "John Gray says we should undoubtedly let that sermon be printed. I told him that we both objected, but he thinks us wrong." Colonel Lee bade them "not hesitate a moment to print"; and the address was soon in the hands of many persons. Touching acknowledgments came from the nearest relatives of the six comrades who were specially commemorated: from Charles Lowell's widow, James Savage's sister, and from the mother and sister of Robert Gould Shaw. The mother of William Lowell Putnam alludes to those happy days in Italy in 1857: —

It is a great pleasure to have a letter from you, and to receive from yourself the Address, which, at the time it appeared, I read with a deep and sacred sense of happiness and admiration.

Since then, I have read it again from time to time, and always with the same appreciation, and the same absorbed interest.

The portraits you have drawn, so lifelike, and so finely dis-

tinguished from one another, are representative of the youth of our country in that hour — of different types, yet alike in certain essential traits. You have given to our national history a page which will live, and teach, and inspire.

Your words, combined with your memorial gift, have prolonged the lives which might have seemed prematurely ended, and have extended their action far beyond its natural term. You have thus fulfilled the highest offices of friendship.

To the deep and devout satisfaction which the knowledge that this work has been done gives me, is added that of its having been done by you.

Those distant days in Italy, are often present to me, with other days that can never become distant to you or to me. . . .

MARY LOWELL PUTNAM.

Particularly gratifying were the notes from old comrades like C. F. Morse, Greeley and Pelham Curtis, Charles L. Peirson, Arnold Rand, Charles Devens, and Lincoln R. Stone. "It is well," said the latter, "to recall the heroic ideal in these days when service seems to mean, not self-denial, doing only our duty to our country, — but money, 'pension' rather, 'pension, pension'!! Ex-President Hayes struck the same key: "We are drifting away from the golden days. We must not drift away from their nobleness." Other men wrote of "the low and sordid current of the times." "Your words struck a note that I am sorry to say seems rare in our days now." Edward W. Hooper, the Treasurer of Harvard, wrote from London: —

"Professor Sophocles used to say to us, 'There is a pleasure in tears.' I have just had such a pleasure while reading the report of your talk to the boys at Cambridge, and I owe you thanks for it — as well as for many other good things. Your gift of land is a great boon to the College, but the words and feelings that went with it are worth more than the land. Life at Cambridge is so comfortable and pleasant that a moral tonic

is really needed from time to time to keep it in health and strength."

Dr. Weir Mitchell, too, read the speech while traveling, and wrote: "I am not ashamed to say that over it I choked like an hysterical girl, and for a little was glad no one was by." "I want to send it to Theodore Roosevelt," wrote Henry Cabot Lodge. "It is the best, noblest, and most simply eloquent utterance that this corner of the world has heard for some time." John C. Bancroft wrote in *Lincolnian* monosyllables: "I can't say any less than that it is a good thing well done and a good speech well said: and I won't say any more lest I say too much."

But of all the scores of letters elicited by the Soldiers Field Address, it may be doubted if any gave more pleasure to its author than those words from a young Harvard athlete, who had perceived the ethical purpose of the Major's exhortation to undergraduates: "It matters but little the week after, whether a boat race or a football match be won or lost; but let a man or a team do but a single thing which is not entirely manly and aboveboard, and it sets them back in the *real* race, perhaps for years."

In that June of 1890, then, began the personal expressions of pride and affection which Major Higginson received from Harvard for nearly thirty years thereafter. There is something touching in the simplicity with which he records his pleasure, in this letter to his wife, on June 22: —

I went out late to Class Day and walked into the tree-grounds with the graduates, and sat on the grass with them all, that the folks on benches might see over our heads. Then in came the Seniors, sang, and then cheered quickly. . . . They cheered Dr. Peabody, Mr. Eliot, George Weld, who gave them the boathouse, and then they cheered me, all coming to their feet and giving me my title, when the Juniors took up the cheers. I got up, too, and stood still and sat down, wishing

that you and Alex were there, a little homesick, as I felt at Sever Hall. It is wonderful to me how sympathetic and kind, men and women, old and young, have been to me, and I am very grateful indeed to them, very glad for you, for you've not had very much to be proud of in your husband, very glad for all those old chaps who used to laugh at me and care for me, very glad indeed that people appreciate these fellows and their quality. Man after man, woman after woman, said the kindest words to me, until I almost cried.

A week later he made his first speech at a Commencement dinner, had ill luck with it, he thought, and made the first of a hundred resolutions never to speak again! "I forgot my piece at Commencement, and so Alex [Agassiz] had to prompt me. It was very late and everyone was tired, and so it went badly and now I shall have no more to say. Lots of people at Cambridge were very civil again to me."

The best evidence of the place Henry Higginson had now won in the regard of the Harvard authorities was his election in December, 1893, as a member of the Corporation. This honor came to him at the close of a distracted year. The failures due to the panic of 1893, while more acutely felt in the West and South than in New York and Boston, had had a disastrous effect upon the stock market. The extra session of Congress, called by President Cleveland in August, finally repealed the Silver-Purchase clause of the "Sherman Act" of 1890, thus maintaining the gold standard. But the free-silver agitation had swept the West; and Wall Street and State Street had had an anxious and at times a despairing summer.¹

¹ "People have been having a real hell of a time of it financially. The silver party in the Senate has been acting with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. Nothing but the certainty of Cleveland's veto has brought things to a square vote there for repeal. Henry Higginson looks as if he had grown five years older. I got an idea the first time I saw him of what the strain must have been." — Henry James to William James, Oct. 29, 1893.

A long letter written by Henry Higginson to his uncle Henry Lee on August 17 gives details of the market situation, of the railroads, and particularly of the affairs of the General Electric Company, of which Higginson had become a director. The closing pages are very personal: —

. . . One thing pray remember — about me. I've inherited from both parents the belief that one cannot escape with honor from the duties of a citizen — and I've seen the example of you and father. Do you suppose that as a child I did n't heed the words of my mother about slavery or your own course as a young man? It made a deep mark on me. And so I have felt and now feel the positive obligation to do as you have done, to struggle against ignorance and selfishness and sin — and in these times I am pushing in all ways at Washington to get action on this accursed law. Indeed, it has seemed to me so vital that I have for that reason feared this present crisis — for years — and if it were over, I should gladly die. But I *must* fight — and yet never in my life have I given my thought or my time so little to outside matters — whether to my family, to the orchestra, or to social duties. I've not been away from the office for even part of a day, during this summer, unless when in New York on duty — and I shall not go away. I am now arranging to send a good agent to Washington for political ends. . . . The firm will not be asked to pay for this.

I say these things to you, because you have a right to my full time and thoughts, and because I wear your name and my father's, and I do not forget it — and try to keep it bright. Life is no boon unless well used. My mother died yesterday and my daughter to-morrow — years ago. Be sure that I'll do my best by you in all ways.

Colonel Lee's reply is one of his masterpieces of whimsical, affectionate admonition: —

BEVERLY FARMS, *August 18, '93.*

MY DEAR HENRY: —

There is a deal of truth and also of self-deceit in your letter.

Get La Farge or some man who will charge enough, and whom you vainly imagine yourself bound to support, to paint for your home this: "Omnes non omnia possumus." One of my neighbors, partly from greed, mostly from good nature and inability to say no, undertook to work himself, horse and oxen, night and day. He died instead of living, poor instead of rich, worn out with work never thoroughly executed because too much undertaken.

Col. Stark, when leading his New Hampshire men over Charlestown Neck across which the cannon-balls were flying, marched moderately, against the remonstrances of his officers, saying, "One fresh man is worth a dozen tired ones"; and that is as true in 1893 as in 1775. Dr. Jackson performed more valuable service than any doctor, and he would not be interrupted at his meals or during his naps. You are not, and cannot be, omnipresent, mind and body; and no matter what the allurements or the entreaty, or the seeming necessity, you must calculate and choose and decline, else your life will continue to be exhausted, your spirits causelessly depressed, your time purloined, your services fitful.

You speak of your mother. She was born with too clear sight for comfort, she too toiled to accomplish, for those she loved, impossibilities, and died of the overstrain. As to my example, do not exaggerate my merits or services. I have been independent, and to a degree, and in certain directions, dutiful, but seldom overworked. A little while ago you had a most seasonable opportunity to close your career as Musical Benefactor, and, in my opinion, should have done so. You could not bear to. Will you now embrace the proper alternative and retire from a most exciting, unwholesome form of business, knowing that for some reason you cannot be cool, systematic, prudent, cannot be aided by partners, however faithful or competent, but partly from temperament, partly

from want of early business training, must always be heated and hurried. When your grandfather Lee was two years younger than you, I drove him to retirement by taking a determined stand, knowing that, if he stayed, he was doomed to reverses or the cheating he could not bear, and consequently grandmother could not bear, and also that, once out, he had plenty of resources. So will you suffer with no good to anybody; so are you able to occupy yourself without business, and so ought you to be constrained.

Let us free ourselves from cant, and not mistake love of excitement and rashness for devotion to duty.

Don't talk about my example, when you give away \$200,000 to music, or \$40,000 to \$50,000 to the Soldier's Field, for you know I have set no such example, and I also know it.

Why, when overtaxed, do you constitute yourself a guardian to an excitable Italian actress¹ whom you know nothing about, who has not the most remote claim on you; why allow yourself to be made President of a superfluous Club got up by people too vacant or too ignorant to know how to live in the country?

No, you are generous, you are full of benevolence inherited from father and mother, and in addition, you are weakly good-natured, and last but not least, you are addicted to excitement, which you foster by your overburdened feverish life, which ends in your being unstrung and depressed. . . .

The anxiety which weights you and all of us down now is fearful, sickening; yet in spite of the wickedness of such men as A——, counseling, from his high place in the Senate, wickedness; in spite of pitiful partisan B——, etc., etc., — I do believe that Cleveland's wise disinterested warnings will be heeded. . . .

I hope your agent may do good service. . . . 31 Dec. 1893,
II. L. and II. L. II. retire from business.

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

¹ Mr. and Mrs. Higginson had been showing great kindness to Madame Duse.

Probably Colonel Lee suspected that his proposal that they should both retire from business at the end of the year would be taken in a Pickwickian sense. On August 29 he made a delightful change of tactics: —

. . . Now, from this hour forward decline all outside work, be it what it may, resolutely. Even then your Music Hall and concerts, added to your business, will be more than you can find time to attend to, leaving necessary time for home and rest. You march into an undertaking voluntarily, or under an utterly false impression that you owe it to somebody to incur such labor and risk, you lose time and money — and who is to blame? Yourself and nobody else. While you go on in this monthly-nurse way, overburdened and distracted and exhausted you will be, poorly discharged will your duties be, in spite of Lanes and Jacksons and Lees and Fairchilds. If you must go on with your music, why not release me and George and yourself from this perilous mode of hardy industry? If you want to make up your losses, then abstain from all, all outside work of whatever kind, and conduct your business quietly, methodically, prudently, leaving a time for gardening, for driving (only don't deceive yourself into buying a \$1000 horse, you can't afford to kick gravel into your eyes), for seeing your friends, including Ida — and then you need not wish to die.

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

P.S. The majority for repeal [of the Silver Purchase clause] is wonderful and we may infer that this delusion is dissipated. . . .

I would not write to anybody unless they requested it. It wastes your time, and is quite as likely to do harm as good, I believe. Congratulatory notes are welcome — but letters of advice, etc.??

The picture of a frugal, industrious, reserved, methodical man, who follows his trade, and orders his affairs discreetly,

is an august spectacle, the sight of it stimulates all to the wisest course, which, if followed by all, would make an Utopia.

Utopia in State Street! Henry Lee was far too shrewd and humorous an old gentleman to expect anything of the sort; but he was very fond of his nephew, and he liked to amuse himself with painting the "august spectacle" of a Henry Higginson miraculously converted into a frugal, reserved, methodical man. And in November, instead of persuading Major Higginson to celebrate the twenty-sixth anniversary of his becoming a member of Lee Higginson and Co. by retiring from the firm, we shall find him urging his nephew to accept the additional and very onerous burden of service on the Harvard Corporation!

The invitation reached Mr. Higginson unexpectedly while he was in New York on business. He wrote to his wife, November 28: —

. . . I've been kept here over to-night, and now wish to greet you and send you this news — that the College would like me as a Fellow of the Corporation.

Am I fit? Shall I accept? The matter has been under consideration for two months, but I never heard a word of it until to-day — and they'd *like* a reply to-morrow — for the regular meeting — so Edward [Hooper] sent word to me.

Will you telegraph me your reply?¹ Personally it seems to me a poor nomination — and an undeserved honor. . . .

By the same mail he wrote to Colonel Henry Lee: —

MY DEAR UNCLE: —

When an honor is offered to me, it always seems as coming by means of my ancestors, and I can only regret that my deserts have been so small. This may seem to you wrong, and yet I always feel it keenly.

¹ The reply was, "Accept. You deserve it. I. A. II."

And now comes one which I have craved for you thro' years and still do — but it does *not* come to you, very likely, because you've been so useful and important elsewhere, the oldest and most honored among the Overseers, the one who is always present, well as ill, rain or shine.

Edward Hooper asks if I will be a Fellow of Harvard College — a great and undeserved honor, a poor choice, a prize which I should be very glad to accept; but how can I?

You know the duties, and my qualities and my great faults. Am I fit for that place, remembering always what a choice of men is open to the College? I can't think so. Then also — I've promised you and my partners and myself that I'll undertake *nothing* without your full approval. My life belongs to my wife and child and to the house, and I've finished my outside interests, even to dinner speeches, have resigned from the University Club, have sold my horses pretty well out, have sold that piece of land, and am expecting to sell two more.

I only wish to work reasonably, and try to make good my errors.

I cannot take this place without your full approval and that of my partners, and of my wife.

You always will give me your full and frank opinion, and it has done me more good than you know. Pray do so again.

Edward asked for a reply for to-morrow. I must stay here about business to-night, and am entirely ready to be guided by you in this matter. Please believe that you cannot hurt my feelings by your candid opinion.

I do wish it were you, and it would be if you were younger.

You have deserved it, but, as I began, it is after all a greater honor to be chosen an Overseer always.¹

Your aff.

II.

¹ This tactful remark does not correspond with the ordinary view of the relative honor involved.

Colonel Lee instantly replied: —

BOSTON, Nov. 29, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

For two months perhaps I have been holding conversations, in some of which you have taken a part, as to whom we should select for the Corporation in place of [Frederick L.] Ames. You have been wanted: —

1. For your affection for the College.
2. For their reciprocation of this feeling, Government and Students and Alumni generally.
3. For your knowledge of men and things; and
4. For your judgment.

In these consultations I have, as far as I can, acted honestly, crediting and debiting you as well as I knew how. I have been rejoiced over this because I thought that your being selected would be very gratifying, and also because I thought the occupation would be the most congenial and wholesome possible, both for the subjects treated and because of the companionship, and that this avocation offered would incline you to slip out of business and perhaps out of the Symphony business after this contract is up.

Whether you ought to engage in this new and weighty task, with all your divers distracting cares, depends on whether you will resolutely, little by little, economize your time and methodize your work, to the great relief of your partners and to the benefit of the business, or whether you will continue your miscellaneous and helter-skelter meddlesome style.

We are all very anxious you should accept such an honor, engage in such a congenial work, and equally anxious that you should amend your life.

As for me, the time has been when I felt that I might as well be in the Corporation as some who were there; but I am convinced that I should never have done for it, while as Overseer I have my uses, *perhaps*.

Your affectionate

UNCLE H.

One week later, Henry Higginson was elected a Fellow of the Corporation — one of that group of five who, together with the President and the Treasurer, form the principal governing board of Harvard University. In reply to the congratulations of Senator Lodge, he answered: —

DEAR CABOT: —

You are very kind. I cannot see the wisdom of the step, for men noted for scholarship or ability or knowledge in some large field are usually and rightly chosen. But the great honor is offered to me — and tho' I at first wished to decline it, my advisers have given other counsel. I know how little good the College will get from me. The kind words of many men and women whom I hold in esteem, as I do you, are very touching. What a wretched failure a man is in his own eyes! . . .

Was he a failure in the eyes of others?

"The kind of man needed in the governing board of a university," says President Eliot,¹ "is the highly educated, public-spirited, business or professional man, who takes a strong interest in educational and social problems, and believes in the higher education as the source of enlightenment and progress for all stages of education, and for all the industrial and social interests of the community. He should also be a man who has been successful in his own calling, and commands the confidence of all who know him. The faculty he will most need is good judgment; for he will often be called upon to decide on matters which lie beyond the scope of his own experience, and about which he must, therefore, get his facts through others, and his opinions through a process of comparison and judicious shifting.

"The best number of members for a university's principal governing board is seven; because that number of men can sit

¹ *University Administration*, by Charles W. Eliot (Boston and New York, 1908), p. 2.

round a small table, talk with each other informally without waste of words or any display or pretence, provide an adequate diversity of points of view and modes of dealing with the subject in hand, and yet be prompt and efficient in the despatch of business. In a board of seven the different professions and callings can be sufficiently represented."

How completely did Henry Higginson fulfil these requirements of the kind of man needed? He served under two chiefs, President Eliot from 1893 to 1909, and President Lowell from 1909 to 1919. The testimony of both should be given here. President Eliot wrote on November 14, 1919,—as it happened, the very day of Major Higginson's death, although the article was intended to appear in honor of his approaching eighty-fifth birthday on November 18,—as follows:—

"His chief direct service has been that he served as a Fellow in the Corporation for twenty-six years, 1893–1919, with the utmost punctuality, assiduity, and devotion, and with intelligence. Why was he chosen a member of the Corporation? Not because he was a successful banker and broker on State Street. Far from it. He was chosen because he was as fine an exemplar of the patriotic citizen-soldier as there was in the country or the world; because he gave the University two great gifts — one the Soldier's Field, on which he hoped that manly sports of many kinds would be generously cultivated through long generations of Harvard youth, and on which he erected a monument to youthful friends of his who fell in the Civil War, and the Harvard Union, where he hoped that democracy and good-fellowship among Harvard students would be forever cultivated; because he had proved himself to be the most successful promoter of good music that Eastern Massachusetts had ever known; and because he was the intimate friend of Alexander Agassiz, a great naturalist and a great administrator in varied fields, who had already served two terms in the Corporation, the last of which closed in 1890; and because the Corporation of that day knew no better example of the public

spirit and courage which had made New England what it then was. The expectations and purposes with which the Corporation of 1893 elected Major Higginson a member of the Board have been completely fulfilled. All men who love Harvard rejoice with Major Higginson at the striking fruits of his noble career."¹

President Lowell writes, February 16, 1921: —

"There are, as you know, two ways in which a member of a Governing Board can be of great use. One is by his perception of the policy the institution ought to pursue and his wisdom in deciding questions that come before the Board. In this Mr. Higginson was not lacking; but his really great contribution was in the second way — that is, in supporting, helping, encouraging, and smoothing the path for those who carry the burden of the administration. It was not only that he did his work well as a member of the Corporation; it was also that I did my work better because he was there, and so, I think, did every man in the service of the University. His sympathy, his active comprehension of the human element in a man's work, made a great difference. When he thought a thing was well done, he said so, and infused a spirit of doing it better still; nor would he hesitate to say a thing was not well done if he thought so. His sympathy went out, also, in the giving of his time and strength. If we wanted to bring a powerful influence to bear upon undergraduate conduct, he was always ready to address a meeting of students, and did it with effect. These are the chief traits of his work as they lie in my mind, and they are very unusual and very valuable ones. They make for the vitality of the whole institution."

The labor and responsibility required of a member of the Corporation are exacting. The Fellows are elected for life. They meet once a fortnight, usually for a four-hours' morning

¹ *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Nov. 27, 1919.



HENRY L. HIGGINSON

From a photograph by G. C. Cox, 1893

session,¹ and in addition there is a great variety of committee work. The associations involved are naturally intimate, and Major Higginson owed some of his warmest friendships to the relations thus established.² The master-key of his own action, as a member of the Harvard and Radcliffe governing boards, was personal loyalty to his chief. He had plenty of ideas of his own, — although not always the greatest confidence in them, — but his instinctive first question was: what does "Charles Eliot" or "Lawrence Lowell" or "Mrs. Agassiz" want done? That they wanted it was often enough for him. Accustomed as he was to individual responsibility, and unafraid of the word "autocracy," he was singularly deferential in council. At an age when many men grow captious and intolerant, he showed a cheerful willingness to "throw his mind into the common pot" — which was Gladstone's test of a good cabinet minister. One of his later colleagues, in fact, thinks that Major Higginson's conciliatory spirit, and instinctive desire to think nobly of men and measures, was his chief service to the Corporation.

He had many intimate friends, of course, among the Overseers and the Faculty, and his correspondence reveals his warm and generous interest in almost every phase of University life. Yet his own instinct led him, from the first, straight to the undergraduates. It was for the "boys" that he gave Soldiers Field. His only son, Alexander, had entered Harvard in 1894,

¹ H. L. H.'s speech to the Associated Harvard Clubs in Chicago, 1906: "I have been in the Corporation twelve years, and that president of ours (who can lift as much as anybody in this room) does not seem to have any tire in him. He puts us to work at half-past ten in the morning, and if we get to lunch at half-past two, we are doing well."

² During his first years of service there were many changes in the Board. John Quincy Adams died in 1894, and Martin Brimmer in 1896. William C. Endicott retired in 1895. Dr. Henry P. Walcott is now (1921) the only member of the Corporation whose service antedates that of Major Higginson. Charles Francis Adams, 2d, succeeded Edward Hooper as Treasurer in 1898. Major Higginson had four younger associates who died in office between 1904 and 1919: Samuel Hoar, Francis C. Lowell, Arthur T. Cabot, and Robert Bacon. Of the members of the Corporation in 1921, President Lowell, Henry P. Walcott, Thomas Nelson Perkins, William Lawrence, John F. Moors, and Charles Francis Adams were all colleagues of Major Higginson.

and for four years the father had been brought into close contact with undergraduates and their problems. One result of this quickened interest was his gift, in 1899, of the Harvard Union.

The Harvard undergraduates of that epoch have recently been described by one of the most gifted of their number, Professor George Santayana, 1886: —

“The students were intelligent, ambitious, remarkably able to ‘do things’; they were keen about the matters that had already entered into their lives, and invincibly happy in their ignorance of everything else. A gentle contempt for the past permeated their judgments. . . . About high questions of politics and religion their minds were open but vague; they seemed not to think them of practical importance; they acquiesced in people having any views they liked on such subjects; the fluent and fervid enthusiasms so common among European students, prophesying about politics, philosophy and art, were entirely unknown among them. . . . Life, for the undergraduates, was full of droll incidents and broad farce; it drifted good-naturedly from one commonplace thing to another. . . . It was an idyllic, haphazard, humoristic existence, without fine imagination, without any familiar infusion of scholarship, without articulate religion: a flutter of intelligence in a void, flying into trivial play, in order to drop back, as soon as college days were over, into the drudgery of affairs. There was the love of beauty, but without the sight of it; for the bits of pleasant landscape or the world of art which might break the ugliness of the foreground were a sort of æsthetic miscellany, enjoyed as one enjoys a museum; there was nothing in which the spirit of beauty was deeply interfused, charged with passion and discipline and intricate familiar associations with delicate and noble things. . . . The young had their own ways, which on principle were to be fostered and respected; and one of their instincts was to associate only with those of their own age and calibre. The young were simply young, and

the old simply old, as among peasants. Teachers and pupils seemed animals of different species, useful and well-disposed towards each other, like a cow and a milkmaid; periodic contributions could pass between them, but not conversation. . . ."¹

Was it possible to create at Harvard "conversation," as it was known at Oxford and Cambridge in England; to create that keen intelligence for public affairs, for contemporary questions of art and literature, which characterizes the foremost universities of the Continent? One man, at least, believed so, William Roscoe Thayer, whom Major Higginson afterward described as "the father of the Union."² For four years, beginning in 1895, Mr. Thayer advocated his idea, backed by the "Crimson" and various committees; until, in 1899, Major Higginson offered \$150,000 for the building. A few sentences from his letters to Mrs. Higginson, who was then in the South, reveal his attitude toward the new enterprise.

November 3, 1899: The papers have the Harvard Union plan, and men are very kind with their notes and words. Meanwhile the students have asked for a "ratification meeting" on Monday at Sanders, and I shall go, of course, and say a few words of our ideas about the Union, for men will easily misunderstand its purpose, and we need the support of everyone.

November 4, 1899: I've sundry nice letters to show you, for people are much pleased, and excellent men think it has been a sore need at Cambridge.

¹ *Character and Opinion in the United States*, by George Santayana; New York, 1920.

² "To the conception of William Roscoe Thayer it is that we owe the act of Major Higginson. . . . He allowed no rest to some of us until that idea assumed a substantial form. . . . Meetings inspired by him were held, and committees organized. Of these committees I was the figurehead, he was the efficient force. . . . At last the giver was found in the person of my familiar and life-long friend." — Charles Francis Adams, '56, in the address at the opening of the Harvard Union, Oct. 15, 1901. *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, Dec., 1901.

November 10, 1899: Morris G. spoke of a fine young graduate from Brookline, who after his four years knew no more boys than at the beginning. It is a pity and we must stop it.

November 12, 1899: I'm still pruning my words for to-morrow, and would make them worthy of the cause; for this club may become a strong influence in college life, and I would make the boys see it — an influence against selfishness and snobbishness. Men are in earnest about it. I will try to tell you of my plans. They simmer in my head and take no shape, until suddenly they come into being.

Of the many "nice notes" which he was saving to show to his wife, the one from Charles Francis Adams may be quoted:—

DEAR HENRY:—

I this morning got your note. I envy you. I would like to have done that! That is your monument, and like a wise man, you have not waited to erect it after death. Now hold on to your wisdom. Concentrate on that, and do not let anyone else touch it. Don't have any partners! Let that be all yours.

In future, — a hundred years hence, — that building will make of you more of a household word at Harvard, than Holworthy, Stoughton or Hollis. You will go directly home to the daily social life of all the students. You will not be an abstraction; you will be a reality. All this in a far-away future.

One thing in connection with this gift I reserve to myself. I propose to give to the club a full-length portrait of you, to be fitted into the wall over the big fire-place in the main sitting-room. A portrait which shall, for all time, familiarize the students with the giver of the edifice. That shall be my contribution. Accordingly we must look about for an artist. . . . Meanwhile you have done the best day's work in your life — and you have before done many good days' work, and you have done it betimes. You have put yourself in the intimate daily

life of the students before John Harvard was. I wish I could have got ahead of you. It only remains for me to associate myself with you, — which I propose to do. . . .

And William James wrote from London: —

Nov. 17, '99.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

Some good angel inspired our neighbor Taussig to write me a letter which reached here night before last, and in which, amongst other pieces of news, he tells of your gift for the University Club. He couples therewith some remarks on your character, of which, in spite of the danger of appearing fulsome, I will transcribe one sentence: "He will never be done with good deeds until he dies; and even then (*pace* Shakespeare) the memory of him ought to bring forth more and more of them *in perpetuas aternitates*." I also, as a humble member of the University, wish to thank you. The Club must inevitably become an institution of the greatest use to the rank and file of the college and schools, and a great additional factor in leaving in them an affectionate memory of the place. I don't like you personally, my dear Henry, but on this occasion I join in the general Rah, rah, rah, you glorious old man! . . .

The "ratification meeting" in Sanders Theatre, on November 13, 1899, was crowded and enthusiastic, and Major Higginson's words were certainly "worthy of the cause," as he had hoped. A few paragraphs must suffice to show their spirit: —

Harvard College is not the corner-stone of the Republic, but it tries to furnish fit material for the building up of the Republic, — men of education, of high purpose and power to execute, men of character who will look their fellows in the face and speak the truth, — good public and private citizens.

Such is the task of every university in our beautiful land, and for this task Harvard must be thoroughly equipped. For this equipment is needed, besides teachers, lectures, and books, the freest and fullest intercourse between the students. . . .

Is there a better or sweeter thing on earth than the free and close intimacy of young fellows, discussing everything on earth and in heaven, tossing the ball from one to another, lifting each other to a higher plane, as healthy, earnest boys will, and thus learning to know their comrades and themselves?

This great blessing and all others the University earnestly seeks for you, and in due course it will require of you full results. The government of the University has steadily striven to offer the largest opportunities for instruction, — lecture-rooms, dormitories, athletic buildings and grounds, — and thus has drawn an ever-growing stream of students to its doors. And by this very action it has unwittingly imperiled the comradeship and social life of the University. The old clubs, with their happy traditions, are delightful; but their membership is small, and entails expenses too large for most young men. Thus have crept in habits of exclusiveness and of luxury in living which hurt our democratic university. President Hadley of Yale, in his inaugural address, noted well this fact as a serious evil at New Haven. In latter years, many a boy has lived through a lonely course here and gone away as lonely as he came.

We cannot bear such a result, cannot tolerate this sense of isolation; and, further, we must see to it that young men entering our University stand on a footing equal in all respects, until they themselves, by their merits or faults, have raised or lowered it. Any other basis implies a failure in the system of our University, which, in the name of true civilization, we will strive to avert.

A Harvard student needs and has the right to every advantage which the government of the University can give. Neither

books, nor lectures, nor games can replace the benefits arising from free intercourse with all his companions — the education of friendship. The proverb says, "We have as many uses for friendship as for fire and water."

Therefore, we will build a great house on college grounds, and vest it in the President and Fellows of the Corporation. We will call it the Harvard Union, and it shall be the meeting-house of all Harvard men — alumni, students, teachers. It shall pay to the University a full rental for its land, and meet its own expenses, as a condition of its being, and it shall be beholden to nobody but to Harvard men and Harvard lovers. It shall have large, simple, comfortable rooms; ample space for reading, study, games, conversation; and a great hall, where all may meet and hold the freest talk in public. In this house should centre all the college news, of work, athletics, sport, of public affairs; and there, we hope, may be found a corner and a chair and a bit of supper for the old and homeless alumni from other cities. . . .

The Harvard Union will in no way antagonize the other clubs, which are so pleasant and so useful; but it needs the support of our whole University world. Note well that fact. Therefore, we will urge every living Harvard man to join us for his sake and ours.

The setting-up of such a meeting-house is a little matter, but the holding-up of it on a large-minded, generous, lasting basis is a great matter, and is impossible unless you, one and all, make it easy. Change it, develop it, do with it what you will, so you keep its character; but use it constantly and in a kindly spirit, and in later life come back to it as to your home.

Just one more point: To whom the conception of a Harvard Union is due is beyond my knowledge;¹ but we owe the fostering of the idea to many men, and we owe the grounds to the Corporation. As you see, it is the result of Harvard teamwork, of mutual reliance, the future abiding-place of comrade-

¹ He had not then learned of Mr. Thayer's service in initiating the idea.

ship; and therefore let it never and in no place bear any name except that of JOHN HARVARD. We will nail open the doors of our house, and will write over them: —

The Harvard Union welcomes to its home all Harvard men.

Two years passed before the Union was ready for occupancy. The new Symphony Hall was building at the same time, and Mr. Higginson's correspondence with architects and builders, and professorial experts like Ira N. Hollis and Wallace C. Sabine, shows his endless interest in details. He was in Europe in the summer of 1901; but on October 15, immediately after his return, came the formal dedication of the Union. The great hall, one hundred feet by forty, was packed with students and alumni. Charles Francis Adams, '56, who presided, was in his best vein, and there were speeches by President Eliot, Malcolm Donald, '99, and James Hazen Hyde, '98, who had given \$20,000 for the Union Library. Mr. Higginson, the last speaker, uttered some eloquent words about friendship and hospitality: —

. . . Our new house is built in the belief that here also will dwell this same spirit of democracy side by side with the spirit of true comradeship, friendship; but to-day this house is a mere shell, a body into which you, Harvard students, and you alone can breathe life, and then, by a constant and generous use of it, educate yourselves and each other.

Looking back in life I can see no earthly good which has come to me, so great, so sweet, so uplifting, so consoling, as the friendship of the men and the women whom I have known well and loved — friends who have been equally ready to give and to receive kind offices and timely counsel.

Is there anything more delightful than the ties between young fellows which spring up and strengthen in daily college life — friendships born of sympathy, confidence, and affection as yet untouched by the interests and claims of later life?

We older men would offer to you a garden in which such saplings will grow until they become the oaks to whose shade you may always return for cheer and for rest in your victories and your troubles. Be sure that you will have both, for the one you will win and the other you must surely meet; and when they come, nothing will steady and strengthen you like real friends, who will speak the frank words of truth tempered by affection — friends who will help you and never count the cost. . . .

One point pray note. The house will fail of its full purpose unless there is always a warm corner for that body of men who devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and to your instruction — the whole staff of Harvard University, from our distinguished and honored President, the professors, librarians, and instructors, to the youngest proctor. And if you see an older graduate enter the hall, go and sit beside him, tell him the college news, and make him a welcome guest, for this is the house of friendship. He wants your news and he likes boys, else he would not have come. Old men are more shy of boys than boys of old men. I have been one and am the other — and ought to know. Like the Arabs, nail open your doors and offer freely to all comers the salt of hospitality, for it is a great and a charming virtue. . . .

In these halls may you, young men, see visions and dream dreams, and may you keep steadily burning the fire of high ideals, enthusiasm, and hope, otherwise you cannot share in the great work and glory of our new century. Already this century is bringing to you younger men questions and decisions to the full as interesting and as vital as the last century brought to us. Every honor is open to you, and every victory, if only you will dare, will strive strongly, and will persist. . . .

In closing, he referred to the recent death of President McKinley, and exclaimed: "May God keep safe and guide aright our fellow graduate, Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States!"

A few days later came this letter: —

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON

October 19, 1901.

MY DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON: —

I have just heard of the close of your address at the Harvard reunion, in which you wished me well with such impressive sincerity. It has touched me deeply, and I thank you for it.

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

President Eliot had already written: —

CAMBRIDGE, 17 Oct., '01.

MY DEAR HIGGINSON: —

Meditating yesterday on that delightful meeting Tuesday evening, I perceived that your public benefactions have had a consistent purpose which has very rarely been so well carried into effect. You have succeeded in promoting, in a community of Puritan origin, things that make for good health, good fellowship, and genuine happiness — namely, music, out-of-door sports, and wholesome sociability under pleasant conditions.

Certainly your many acts of public spirit have a unique and wholly admirable quality. You and yours ought to have heart-felt satisfaction in them.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

The visitor to the Harvard Union to-day will see in the great living-room Sargent's magnificent portrait of Major Higginson — seated, with his cavalry cloak thrown across his knees. It was given, not by a private donor, but by a subscription from undergraduates.¹ The Union, after various

¹ At a meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs in Cincinnati in 1909, Mr. Higginson told this story about the portrait: —

"Let me give one further illustration, which makes me choke every time I think of it. It is purely egotistical. When the students were trying to get money for a

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON

October 19, 1901.

My dear Major Higgins:

I have just heard of the close of your address
at the Harvard reunion, in which you wished me well
with such ^{impressive sincerity} ~~generous expressiveness~~. It has touched me
deeply, and I thank you for it.

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

Major Henry L. Higgins,
State Street,
Boston, Mass.

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM THEODORE ROOSEVELT

vicissitudes, has become an indispensable factor in the life of the University. That it has accomplished all that was first dreamed for it, no one would claim. The ideal community of scholars, like democracy itself, is always arriving — and it never quite arrives.³ Yet for a score of years the Union has striven to approximate those early visions of its possible service. It has given something of a home to otherwise homeless individuals and organizations, and it has been the scene of many remarkable gatherings.

One of these must be mentioned. It will be remembered that, shortly before President Eliot's retirement in 1909, there was much talk of Theodore Roosevelt, among others, as a possible successor. Major Higginson, as a member of the Corporation, was of course deeply interested in their choice, and his friends will recall that he used to carry in his pocket a list of the various names which had been suggested for the approaching vacancy. It was even a longer list than that of his twenty-two possible directors for the Symphony Orchestra, and he would pull it out, with his teasing, quizzical smile, and

portrait of myself to put in the Harvard Union, they went around and asked for it of the various men in College. (I want you to understand that the students paid for that portrait and put it there. They asked John Sargent to paint it, and he did.) One of the men who was looking for money came to College House where the poor fellows live, and asked: 'Is there anylxly upstairs here?' He was told there was a chap up in the attic, but that he had no money. He went up, looked in the door, and found the man cooking supper at the fireplace. He drew back and shut the door behind him. But the man came after him and said, 'What do you want?' — 'I don't want anything.' — 'Yes, you do, you came for something; what did you come for?' — 'Well,' said he, 'some money for that portrait.' The man said, 'Well, here, I have got thirty-two cents. I am going to-night to the wharf for work; I will give you twenty-five cents.' Can any of you do better than that, gentlemen? That fellow was paying twenty-five cents out of the thirty-two cents to paint a portrait of me, because he thought he wished to do it. (Applause.) If we have men of that sort, if men come there and go through college by working at night on the wharves as that man was doing — we are all right!"

³ In 1919 the Union was taken over by the University authorities. The title of the property is now vested in the President and Fellows, who appoint a Graduate Manager. A Governing Board, chosen annually, directs the policy of "the clubhouse for social purposes for members of Harvard University." Since this change was made, the Union has entered upon a period of great activity and success.

ask for additions and corrections. No one could tell how far he was serious. But his friend William James suspected that Major Higginson's personal fondness for Roosevelt did not carry with it the fullest conviction as to Roosevelt's fitness for this particular post.

He had written to the Major: —

"Think of the virtues of Roosevelt, either as permanent sovereign of this great country, or as President of H. U. I've been having a discussion with X—— about him, which has resulted in making me his faithful henchman for life, X—— was so violent. Think of the mighty good-will of him, of his enjoyment of his post, of his power as a preacher, of the number of things to which he gives attention, of the safety of his second thoughts, of the increased courage he is showing, and above all, of the fact that he is an open, instead of an underground leader. . . . Bless him — and d—— all his detractors like you and X——. . . ."¹

To this Major Higginson replied: —

. . . His great virtues and his high character are indisputable, and his tremendous energy and courage should be used for the public good; but in the first place, I do not believe that he could give up the very large field in which he has lived and wrought such great things, and be happy in a quiet, studious atmosphere of Yankee scholars. Next, we need a man of much judgment, and is judgment to be found coupled with such enormous energy? This last thought has always perplexed my mind, but I believe the two things to be almost always incompatible. You philosophers know the correctness of my thought. . . . If I may be allowed to say so, I judge somewhat by myself, as I always wish to do things my own way and to see things as I wish, being very narrow-minded and self-willed. Luckily, I've always lived, from my young boyhood to the present time, with men and women greatly

¹ This letter is printed in full in the *Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 232.

my superiors. . . . Can a man be of any real use or value in this life unless he knows what a limited and damned fool he is?

Then came a speech by President Roosevelt in the Harvard Union, where he seems to have captivated most of the "detractors." Henry Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge, February 25, 1907:—

. . . We had great pleasure in seeing the President. He was pleasant, jolly — indeed, full of fun; talked to the students in excellent fashion, and was very friendly (as he always is) to me when I had the pleasure of seeing him at Bishop Lawrence's. I agree to a dot with what he says about play and study, and also about the duty of these young men to their country. As he went along, I could not help thinking how he was saying just what was in my mind, and saying it very much better than I could. It was very wholesome talk, and the students enjoyed it immensely. One of them is sitting in my office now, and has said that very thing to me. It was really a great sight to see those boys packed as close as herrings, and see a lot of the teachers up in the gallery, and see the general enthusiasm of welcome and eagerness to hear what the President had to say. . . .

Alas! however, for the orator who has to please with the same speech the "boys packed as close as herrings," and the "teachers up in the gallery!" For among those teachers in the gallery was William James.

"You remember one day," he wrote to Henry Higginson in 1909, "when I tried to convert you to the notion of Roosevelt as a Harvard President. He ceased to be my candidate after his speech to the men in the Harvard Union, in which, altho' he praised scientific research, there was n't otherwise a single note of elevation or distinction in anything he said. Just the

ordinary street-level talk of fairness and courage, and down with molly-coddles, meaning by them all the men with courage enough to oppose *him*. I gave him up! At the same time I believe his influence on our public life and on our people's feelings about public life has been of enormous value. . . ."

It is natural, in telling the story of Henry Higginson's interest in University affairs, to speak first of his chief services to Harvard. But these were only a part of his friendly concern for the American college everywhere. "Mates, the Princeton and the Yale fellows are our brothers," he had exclaimed in the Soldiers Field address, and everyone knew that he meant it. The sons of Eli and of Old Nassau have sometimes been puzzled by certain representatives of Harvard, but they had no difficulty in placing Major Higginson. In the undergraduate vernacular, he was "all right." It is pleasant to know that the key-note of the Soldiers Field speech — "all these dead men would have done a great deal for the world, and I *must* do what lies in my power to carry out their will"¹ — found a singularly fitting response from Yale. On December 9, 1892, Major Higginson had entertained the Yale and Harvard football teams at dinner in the University Club at Boston. Among the older guests was the Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Twichell, — a member of the Yale Corporation and a famous army chaplain, — who held a place in the affection of Yale men very similar to that enjoyed by Henry Higginson in Cambridge. Shortly after Christmas he wrote to Major Higginson from Hartford: —

DEAR COL. HIGGINSON: —

The beautiful copy of "The Soldier's Field" which you sent me was, to my feeling, the crown of my Christmas gifts this time. Thank you kindly for it. If it were framed in gold, it would not, in my eye, be too richly dressed.

¹ H. L. H. to Edward W. Hooper, June 15, 1900.

I thank you also for offering me additional copies, should I desire them. I expressed to Mr. Bacon, beside whom I had the good luck to be seated at the dinner, my wish that every member of the Yale team might have one. If they have not been furnished with them, I should feel it a privilege to be the medium of their supply. Yes, and I would exceedingly like to have a moderate stock on hand for future use — to give out now and then to Yale boys of my acquaintance who are to take part in intercollegiate contests.

Would God I could preach a sermon half as well worth circulating! — with half as much essential Christianity in it, I mean.

Thank you too for your letter. I think that, to us fellows who went to the war, the memory of those noble and dear spirits it parted from us forever for this world is freighted with the same perennial sacred meaning.

What you said it meant to you brought to my mind, dimly, a passage of a Decoration Day address I made away back some time in the sixties. So I hunted it up to see exactly what it was. And here it is.

"For one, I own myself called to double duty. For the friend with whose life, a little while ago, my own was most entirely mingled, — the man I loved, — for whose sake I think I would have died, lies now beneath the mound of a soldier's grave, a bullet through his true heart, the cold marble standing sentinel over his dear remains. As my thoughts wander away to seek the place, and I read the inscription 'Aged 27,' I feel that I have not only my work to do in life, but his also."

I was young when I said that. To-day I would repeat it; but in that manifold deeper sense of its import which you have expressed. I feel just as you do — and the more so, the older I grow.

When Major Higginson received his honorary degree of LL.D. from Yale in 1901, he was characterized by President

Hadley as "the ideal Harvard man." His zest for contributing to the funds of other colleges than his own was insatiable, and both Yale and Princeton made chivalrous response. I quote a portion of a letter written by a Princeton Trustee in 1909: —

DEAR MAJ. HIGGINSON: —

Of all the innumerable fine things which you have done in your life, about the finest was that unsolicited gift of the Harvard Fellowship to Princeton. I have been longing ever since to be in position to get even with you, and am happy to say that I have at last arrived.

You will confer a great favor upon me if you will ascertain if the authorities of Harvard University will accept a similar gift from me to endow a Princeton Fellowship at Harvard, on the same general terms under which you gave your Fellowship to Princeton. If so, I shall be very glad, after the turn of the year, to send you my check for \$10,000 for this purpose. . . .

"This gift from Princeton," wrote President Lowell to Mr. Higginson, "will help to cement the kind feeling, and the sentiment that after all we are working for something higher and larger than the prosperity of our own institutions, as we are common servants of a common country."

He made generous and quiet benefactions to Williams, to the University of Virginia, and to a multitude of other colleges and schools. I recall a Commencement dinner at the University of Virginia, when President Alderman announced a liberal gift from a donor who refused to let his name be known. But the President then proceeded to read aloud a portion of a very characteristic letter. It began: "My friend Charles Eliot tells me that you are trying to raise an endowment fund," and then followed some abrupt humorous sentences about an enclosed check and the request for secrecy. "I wish I could show you the signature," said President Alderman, turning to his guest

from Massachusetts. But it needed no signature to identify one of Henry Higginson's inimitable notes.

"I am tearing my shirt," he wrote to Senator Lodge in 1901, "to get a few remaining dollars for a professorship of economics at Washington and Lee University, to which I attach the greatest importance." It may be added that he had a delightfully peremptory fashion of summoning his friends to help in these worthy causes. Generally they surrendered promptly.

Single-handed, Major Higginson undertook such enterprises as the founding of the Morristown School in New Jersey, though he would never allow his name to be mentioned; and he gave freely to the Middlesex and other schools in New England. Time and time again he furnished the Boston Symphony Orchestra, at his own expense, for academic celebrations in New Haven, Princeton, and Williamstown. He was a Director and endower of the American Academy in Rome. In 1901 he accepted Mr. Carnegie's invitation to become a trustee of the Carnegie Institution. The iron-master's notes are most characteristic:—

COL. HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

DEAR SIR:—

I am about to transfer ten millions of 5% bonds to a body of Trustees for the purposes described in the enclosed paper. A list of the Trustees selected is also enclosed. It will be a source of much pleasure to me if you will kindly consent to serve.

Very truly yours,

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

A second note deals with the selection of a President for the Institution:—

April 2nd, 1904.

GRAND HOTEL DU CAP, ANTIBES (A.M.)

MY DEAR FRIEND:—

Sorry your note finds me beyond your circuit. I am not apprehensive about the Committee's selection, not one whit.

They will select the best man for a trial, that's all — the one who seems to them most likely to prove *the* man for the place, but after all by his fruits ye shall know him. Preconceived notions of a man's ability and suitability for a new position are of little value. Such is my own experience. Many an able Colonel have I promoted to Brigadier Generalship, to find his qualities did n't stretch. I reproach myself with the ill health of several, and the death of more than one. Therefore, my friend, the Committee trying a man will, I know, watch him closely, give him rope more or less to see just what he amounts to in his new untried and dizzy height. . . .

During the years when Mr. Carnegie's friend Dr. Pritchett was serving as President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Major Higginson came into intimate relations with him. The welfare of the Technology students was constantly upon the Harvard Fellow's mind. The following note will represent many similar ones.

DEAR MR. PRITCHETT: —

Mrs. Pritchett last night spoke of a freshman at the head of his class on \$3 a week. "Nichts kommt heraus!" *Lend* the boy \$200, to be spent on *food* and to be returned to me when he can. Do this if you think it best. Business loan secured by his character. Don't give me away to *anyone* and send for the money if you wish. Yrs.

H. L. HIGGINSON.

The occasion for the second and even more delightful note was an attack by a Boston preacher upon the beer-drinking habits of "Tech." students: —

Feb. 11th, 1902.

MY DEAR DR. PRITCHETT: —

Is it not a pity that so many geese exist, and more especially in the church? and what has our Saviour to do with beer-

drinking? I hate beer, and want no wine or liquor, and should be glad to suppress them, but feel just so about lobsters and salad of all kinds. Mince-pie I like, but they've nothing to do with the church or religion. Indigestion is injurious and foolish, and has come to me oftener from water in excess than from rum or pic — but the church likes water.

Next they'll ask you how often your boys bathe, whether in hot or cold water, and if they use soap which floats.

Every time you say a word in public, I wish I had said it. The church suffers more from the priesthood than from us sinners, or even sin. It is a great and beneficent institution badly run, but Gordon and Bishop Lawrence are *good*. I'm *very* sorry we can't dine with you, but are tied up. Remember that I've a preferred claim on your hall for the boys — as a builder. Play fair with me, for it is the only way to win games. \$10,000 on it.

Yours truly,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

That Mr. Higginson could be wisely tolerant of youthful folly, without condoning anything dishonorable, is shown by his comment on the now forgotten "Med. Fac." episode at Harvard in 1905. Dean Hurlbut had handled a most difficult question of discipline with such courage and originality as to bring about the voluntary suppression of the ancient "Med. Fac." organization. Mr. Higginson wrote to Dean Briggs:—

Touching this Med. Fac. matter, — Dean Hurlbut's letter, yours and [E. S.] Martin's I have read, and glanced at the "Herald" editorial. Dean Hurlbut's plan seems to me clever and sound; and it is ingenious and kindly. No right-minded man will fail to condemn as foolish and childish and distinctly wrong any such action as that of the Med. Fac. the other day. It is not nearly as bad a prank as took place by men in and out of the Med. Fac. when I was in college, and since then. The

worst prank I ever knew of was very dishonest and very bold and was repeated because of a challenge to repeat it. The men were among the best in college — two or three of them very high-minded men indeed. I asked one, who was an intimate of mine, why they did it, and he said: "Because we were in a morbid state of mind and did n't care what happened, and we wanted something to arouse us." He had gone armed with a bludgeon. I asked him if he meant to use it, and he said "Yes."—"And did you recognize that you might kill a man by so doing?" He said, "Yes; and I should have used it." He was shot dead in the war, like many good fellows.

The only surviving man of this crowd is the highly honorable, trustworthy president of a savings bank — good in every respect, and has been so for fifty years, to my knowledge. He was simply a first-class jackass on those occasions and, for the time being, a criminal. I expressed to these men great disgust at their prank, and they simply laughed. They all of them led very fine, or, at least (lacking one case only), a decent life. It would have done no good to send any of them to jail; it would have done them all good to be whipped. The object of discipline is to make men go straight and not to hurt them, and I don't believe any punishment would have stopped any future proceedings of the Med. Fac.

By this move of Dean Hurlbut's he has united all parties in the wish to wipe out the Med. Fac. The present and ancient members of that society have agreed to do everything in their power to squelch it now and for all time. The other students at Cambridge wish to get rid of it; the government of the College wishes to get rid of it. Everybody is united in this measure. It is one thing to be a jackass and another thing to break one's solemn word, and I think it is doing a lot of good fellows a rank injustice to suppose that they, respectable citizens of the community and foolish students (who, nevertheless, are honorable in the ordinary sense of the word),

will promise solemnly to do a thing and then break their word.

As to the rubbish of supposing that these boys or any of them are let off because they belong to well-to-do people, rather than to poor people, it is a mean thing to say. It will puzzle anybody to find an instance in a great while in the history of the University that any such distinction has been made by the government of the University or by any prominent member of it.

As to these young men deserving punishment, leave that for the law. Dear me! if we all were spanked every time we deserved a spanking in this life, what a sorry time we should have! It is a brilliant, generous, human effort to straighten out some foolish boys and get rid of a real evil; and, so far as my word goes, Dean Hurlbut has my sympathy and support, and so have you.

As for Martin's letter, he was as pungent as he was humorous, but then he can't help it.

What is the use of growing old if one cannot have a soft spot for folly? I have seen and committed more acts of folly than the whole senior class, probably, and have not been punished as often as I should have been. Young people are very fond of talking of getting one's deserts, but I don't want mine, nor do most old people. Deliver us from the temptation of making forcibly others do right — and read [Sill's] "The Fool's Prayer." It was written for me and on account of me. . . .

[P.S.] Tell Hurlbut my opinion if he wants it.

It is not strange that a man of such human qualities should touch the imagination of undergraduates. Sometimes, of course, they thought Major Higginson a trifle Quixotic, as when, for instance, he declared at the Yale-Harvard football dinner: "It may be that soon we shall see a football captain sending one of his own men off the field for unfair play. Who

so fit to do it as he?" That phenomenon has not yet been observed. Yet one way to hasten the millennium is to believe that it is coming; and when Major Higginson went to New Haven in 1898, in the Tavern Club car, to see the Yale game, he wrote to his wife: "We saw our lads play a very handsome game and beat Yale 17 to 0, fairly. I saw no bad manners at all and think there were none." And as a matter of fact, that was a notably clean game.

It was in the nineties that Major Higginson began his long series of brief Memorial Day speeches at Harvard. A letter to Colonel Henry Lee (May 24, 1892) asks advice about details of the ceremonial: —

MY DEAR UNCLE: —

The note to the students suited them, and convinced them — but they need something to start them, something to gather for, beyond the usual flower-tribute, which has become perfunctory. Richard Norton came in to see me last night, talked it over, and wanted to gain this point.

We suggested the reading of President Lincoln's Gettysburg address, — 3 minutes long, — or the last stanza from Mr. Lowell's Ode, or both, or something else. Finally, it was suggested that I should repeat my letter of yesterday — in effect — and then read this address of Mr. Lincoln's — *i.e.*, Richard asked if I would do so, the boys singing a song or two, laying their flowers on the tablet, and all over in 15 minutes. I said that I'd do it, if the boys wished it — and he came in to-day to beg that I would.

That is all simple — is none of mine — is healthy, and the address is a jewel. Does this please you?

Have you any suggestions to make? Shall I read also that last stanza of Mr. Lowell's Ode? I should like to do the right thing, be *very* short, hear a song — and keep *every* personal element and all "slop" out of it.

You see such things in your mind's eye and will know what

to say. I begged Richard to see that it was well arranged, without formalities of college-officers or the like, *all* done by the boys, vigorously, and finished quickly.

These boys never meant to ask for anything but a word or two from me and even that as a *point d'appui*, as a crowd of lads are hard to start. And they all hope and ask earnestly that the older graduates will come.

If only the custom of singing and flowers and nothing more can be begun, I think some good will have been accomplished; but I await your judgment, tho' I've agreed to go out and salute them in any case, and read this word or two.

Few of his auditors ever knew how he worried over these little speeches. He wrote them painstakingly, and tried to memorize them; but even in the brilliant Soldiers Field address, he had had to be prompted by a young medical student who sat behind him with the manuscript. Of the Memorial Day address of 1897, on Robert Gould Shaw, he wrote to his wife before the ordeal: "I wish it were better, less tired, less dull; but my day has gone by even in that late field." Yet he charmed his audience, and continued to do so for another score of years.

As he grew older, the tender elegiac note in these Cambridge addresses became more and more apparent. It gave great delicacy and beauty to his portraits of women friends, — Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Sarah Helen Whitman, Josephine Shaw Lowell, and Ellen Hooper Gurney, — which he read on various occasions at Radcliffe. How graceful are the opening words of his sketch of Mrs. Agassiz: —

Woman is a closed book to men, and whenever a man says that he knows women well, you may be sure that he knows them very little. The only key to this closed book known to me is to love them — love them, not perhaps as wives or sweethearts, but as friends. It is an education and civilization

along delicate lines, and all education is dangerous because it opens the mind and the spirit to new ideas which may mislead.

A few sentences give a memorable picture of Mrs. Whitman:—

She disliked ugly or unfit objects of daily use, and put a graceful silver pitcher on the desk in Sanders Theatre, to replace an ugly, common water-jug. She was fond of jewels and fine book-binding and, in general, of beautifying everyday life. She has left behind her sundry portraits of men, women and children, which show sentiment and comprehension of her friends. These pictures, together with many landscapes and colored glass-work, she made at her studio, where she often invited her friends and strangers of note—for a cup of tea and a bit of bread; and we all flocked thither. We remember her tall, graceful figure, clad in a quaint fashion, and her friendly smile and greeting. . . . She was an intense woman, who gave her possessions and herself to others without stint—indeed, with boundless hospitality of soul; yet we felt a great reserve, and well knew that behind the door of her own room we could not venture. Of familiar friends who counted on her she had many, but whether she had intimates, I never knew.

And how Mrs. Gurney lives again in these brief lines:—

How is one to describe a rose, to recite its beauty, its nature, its charm and the memory which it leaves to those who have seen it? Mrs. Gurney—Ellen Hooper she was to us—was a beautiful flower and of such peculiar quality that she baffles description. From her childhood I knew her,—as a small girl at school, full of intelligence and mischief and waywardness,—as a maiden budding into womanhood, running

over with fun and bright thoughts, — as a grown woman intent on the ideas of the clever men and women whom she daily saw, full of interest for the new aspects of life, and full of fire for the cause of the Union in our great Civil War. . . . She loved books and sought the occupation and solace of them. Once, in talking with Mr. Emerson, who was the beloved apostle of our youth, and who had known her parents, he said: "Miss Hooper, reading is a matter of race with you." She replied: "Yes, I do read very fast." . . . She loved the sea and the skies, and delighted in walking and riding on horseback in the woods. I well remember her handsome vicious black mare, and once, when the mare was rebellious, said to her: "Ellen, some day that mare will kill you." She replied: "Henry, I don't mind being killed, but I do not wish to have my front teeth broken." She was a wonderful woman, gifted with the love of poetry, nature, books, talk, wit, humor, and, most of all, love of men and women. All was grist to her mill, and her mill ground exceeding fine. She could not express fully what she thought and felt, because she was running over with thought and feelings, and yet shy, but those which came from her were pure jewels. . . . Her lovely head and figure and voice, with its sweet, low tones and perfect enunciation, her beautiful hands and feet, her brilliant, kindly wit, her frank truthfulness, her exquisite ways and her charming manners all remain in the memories of her lovers.

It is no wonder that Rufus Choate's daughter — Mrs. Helen Choate Bell — wrote to Mr. Higginson: "If Sargent could paint with his brush portraits of the strength and delicacy which you paint with your pen — well! he would not be Sargent! You have made Ellen Gurney blossom in the garden of my memory, till she stands before me like a white hyacinth."

William James wrote: —

"As for your address, it was good in every sense of the word,

but more of the Radcliffe girls ought to have heard it. Your loyalty to old friends is magnificent, but after all one can't carry on any real feeling of the worthies of one generation into the next unless they have figured in countless memoirs, autobiographies, correspondences, etc., with sayings, anecdotes, etc., innumerable. Johnson is a live figure to us because Boswell reported him stenographically and so copiously. Your lachrymals, dear Henry, and your lips lie too close together. I don't think you spoke of Effie L.'s *voice* — to me that constituted perhaps her chief personal charm. So low and yet so vibrant. . . ."

Yet the sentimental side of Henry Higginson, true and deep as it was, was only one phase of a complex personality. As he faced, during the last decade of his life, the intricate problems involved in the expansion of Harvard University, he showed a singular capacity for looking forward and not back. He was resourceful in plans, tireless in curiosity and energy. He had the foresight and the hope of youth, as one knowing that the Alma Mater, at least, is immortally young, immortally exigent.

Of all the departments of the University, the Medical School was perhaps nearest his heart. His correspondence with President Lowell reveals him as the sustainer of a new professorship in the Medical School in 1909, providing \$5000 a year for five years, in order to secure a brilliant specialist. Five years later he is full of enthusiasm over a second new professorship in the School. It was a hard year with him financially, and there is something boyish in his excuses for giving more than he could now afford to give — particularly as he had just contributed \$25,000 toward the Freshman Dormitories. He writes to President Lowell: "You see \$5000 yearly for five years is not \$25,000. I ought not to draw out large sums from our business, but ought to spend my income. Why pile it up? . . . You really agree and live up to it, but are careful of me. Don't! Why not do as you'd be done by?

Who knows how much will be left presently? and meantime let us trust in the Lord."

It was typical of him that, when the Corporation was obliged, one year, to reduce the appropriation for the Jefferson Physical Laboratory, he should quietly send his personal check to Professor Trowbridge to make up the amount — under a pledge of secrecy. More than once a Harvard professor received a generous bank draft "for your own personal expenses or comforts. I hope you will accept it in the spirit in which it is offered, and believe that this gives me more pleasure than any other use I can make of the money." It was never possible to trace the giver, but "the long arm of coincidence" pointed significantly toward 191 Commonwealth Avenue.

Typical, likewise, is the story kindly written by Professor Taussig about the beginnings of the Graduate School of Business Administration: —

"In the spring of 1907 the project for the establishment of a business school had become ripe for action. It had been under consideration for some time, and had been the subject of repeated conferences between myself and President Eliot. The distinctive feature of the school, namely, that it should be a graduate department, on a par with the Law School and Medical School, had been approved by the Corporation, and the development of the project on this basis was settled. There remained the question of ways and means. The belief of those concerned was that the sum of \$25,000 a year for five years would suffice as a launching fund. Somewhat rashly, I undertook to see that such a sum would be provided, and was authorized by President Eliot to endeavor to secure it.

"Good progress was made in the first appeals to donors. More particularly, the General Education Board, attracted by a scheme for a novel and promising experiment in education, agreed to provide one half the sum needed. A considerable part of the remainder was pledged, when the panic of the

autumn of 1907 put a damper on all undertakings of the sort. It was not deemed wise to press appeals for money during the winter of 1907-08.

In the spring of 1908, however, it became necessary to determine whether the school should be established in the autumn of that year, as had been originally contemplated. The Corporation passed a vote to the effect that, if the project for a business school was to be carried out, it was desirable that the necessary funds should be provided forthwith. That vote was communicated to me.

"I recall vividly that the very morning on which the memorandum from the Corporation reached me by mail, a telephone call came from Lee, Higginson and Co., asking me to meet Major Higginson at some time on that day. An appointment was arranged for the afternoon at the familiar apartment at 191 Commonwealth Ave. On arrival I was shown at once to the modest room which Major Higginson kept for himself: almost bare, equipped with an iron bed and Jaeger blankets, a simple table and a chair or two. There Major Higginson went at once to the root of the matter and asked whether I had received the communication from the Corporation about the funds for the business school. Hardly waiting for a reply, he went on in some such words as these: 'Go to President Eliot to-morrow morning and tell him that a donor whose name you are not at liberty to state, but whose financial ability you can guarantee, has underwritten the entire sum still remaining to be raised on the estimated annual requirements for the business school.' And then he turned the conversation to other matters and talked about music, the University, the Union. Needless to say, a load was off my mind; especially as the spring was a busy one, and I was not at the moment in the mood for gathering pledges or able to spare the time. The Corporation acted upon the verbal assurance which I gave to President Eliot. Professor Gay was elected Dean of the School and it was launched on the career with which all Harvard men are familiar.

"In the autumn of 1908 I found myself able to take up once more the task of gathering pledges, and had the satisfaction of securing the full amount without resort to Major Higginson. None the less, his guarantee not only was an immense relief to myself, but made it possible to carry out the program as matured.

"Perhaps I should add that, at an earlier stage, in the spring of 1907, when Major Higginson knew that pledges for contributions were being asked, he remarked jocularly that he was much disposed to take a ticket himself, but already had a good many on hand for other voyages. The circumstance that he had already done so much for the University was an obvious reason why he should not be asked to join in this enterprise. His generous spirit impelled him to volunteer when something in the nature of an exigency arose."

Henry Higginson was too loyal an Emersonian not to remember the proverb quoted in the essay on "Compensation": "What will you have? quoth God; pay for it and take it." He received from his own Alma Mater and from a very large circle of college men throughout the country all the honor and affection of which a man could dream. He paid the price, not merely in money, — which he counted as nothing except as an opportunity of service, — but in time, energy, and travail of soul. "Himself he could not save." What he said once to the boys of Middlesex School about Dean Briggs reveals his own spirit: "His head, hand, heart are at your service for twenty-four hours for three hundred and sixty-five days in each year. If you go to him once, you will go again." He simply did not know how any servant of the College could keep back part of the price.

Over-work was the inevitable consequence.¹ The solicitude and admonition of his friends find constant expression in his correspondence. President Eliot writes him in 1906: —

¹ "Lack of self-control has marked my life. When the University or a cause or a person needs help, I wish to bear a hand. In consequence, I bite off more than I can chew (*my epitaph*) and half do things or load myself to a fretting point, often." H. L. H. to B. P., Jan. 14, 1912.

"Will you let me exhort you most urgently to take greater care of yourself, partly by avoiding all work and all pleasure which may involve exposure to cold, or to hot emotions. Warmth and serenity are desirable for men of our age. . . . I submit that good sense requires a more careful way of living than comes natural to you. . . . You will excuse me for writing in the above hortatory way. I feel strongly on the subject, because I have a high sense of the value of your life to the community. Naturally I have talked with some of your partners in business on the subject; but they invariably say that they do their best and yet find themselves very ineffectual."

The recipient of this letter knew, of course, that such advice was sound; and though it was temperamentally impossible that he should follow it, he preached to his friends those very counsels of perfection which he refused to apply to himself. A month after receiving President Eliot's letter, how deftly does Major Higginson turn the same argument against President Pritchett!

Charley Stone writes me that you are ill, and it is high time that you were. I thought you had more sense than I, and would know enough to stop somewhere within a reasonable point, and you have done nothing of the sort. . . . May I suggest that, if you were in my employ, I should come up and give you a spanking? . . . I was housed the Monday before Thanksgiving, and hope with good luck to get out in the first week of the year, and I have had a very sweet time — as I did two years ago; and have also known from the beginning to the end that I have brought it on myself just as much as if I had got drunk and had delirium tremens.

You are of far too much value to many people to be allowed the sort of freedom which you have taken with yourself. With an old corpse like me it is no great matter; but you are in the full vigor of your manhood, and you have a piece of work on hand of inestimable value to the best class of people in the

country, *i.e.*, the teachers. . . . If a man or a woman shows a capacity for doing anything, or a willingness to listen to the tales of others, he is sure to be crowded to death. . . .

I do not know what you could expect [he writes to Dean Briggs in 1908], except that some disease would catch you because you live so fast. A man cannot do everything, and you are trying to. Have you not reached the time in life when quality is of more value than quantity? That is, your existence and influence are worth more than your work — and no one would undervalue the latter.

Nor does he hesitate to exhort the Bishop of Massachusetts to amend his life: —

BOSTON, Jan. 17, 1919.

DEAR BISHOP: —

You are very good to everybody except yourself. Fred Shattuck and Frank Balch have told me for ten years that I could behave and flourish, or go it blind and pay the bill — and the same is true of William Lawrence, only more so. It would be better for the public, let alone your friends and lovers, if you would behave. I am much troubled at your grievous illness. Pray consider your ways, for nobody of my acquaintance keeps such a full head of steam as you do. You have all the feelings toward you which are possible and lots of sympathy, and get *Well Now*.

Yours affectionately,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

To complete this series of preachments, take another letter to Dean Briggs, upon his departure for Paris as Exchange Professor. Lovers of irony should remember that neither of these great servants of the University had in the preceding dozen years altered his ways in the slightest.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Feb. 20, 1919.

MY DEAR DEAN: —

In the hurry of departure, that you should have written to me is a great proof of your kindness and friendship. I am delighted that you are going to France to represent the University and our country — and you will do both, and thereby teach Europe what we are. Of course you are a great loss here, both to the University and to Radcliffe. I can remember no fault of yours, except your desire to take on another piece of work and then another; and I often wish that, at your age, you would be content — for you must be sixty. When you return, cannot you moderate your desire for work? A great railroad man said to me once: "The head of a great railroad ought to have no work or anything to do except to sit at his desk and consider" — and it seems to me that you are in pretty much that position. Of course, the girls would mourn, and the University might suffer; but also, you have a wife and children. I have often thought how decent men make a certain oath in church with regard to a woman when they "take up" together and then how the man does not get drunk, or does not steal, but he does overwork and keep himself away from his family. As a matter of morals, is it much worse to drink too much wine or to do too much work? I do not know, but I do know this: that Frank Balch, who is a wise, kind adviser, who has taken care of me since he left College, said to me one day: "If you cannot moderate your gait, you will catch it." — "Well," said I, "Frank, how?" — Said he: "That I cannot tell you, but you will catch it." On the 6th of March, 1918, the devil knocked at my door, and he has sat in my lap ever since. I have wasted a year or more in bed, wasted lots of money, worried my wife and friends, and am less wise than I was before. Fred Shattuck has told me the same as Frank Balch, and said to me: "Only your power of sleep, which is enormous, has saved you from going to the devil long ago." But I do not do as much work as

you do, and could not. Possibly when you come back, you may be more sober, and wiser. Then we will put you on a pedestal, where you belong. . . .

Yet if the price paid by Henry Higginson for personal devotion to his Alma Mater was great, the reward was great also. He renewed his vitality by intimate contact with the spirit of youth. Thousands of Harvard men remember him, not so much as the donor of Soldiers Field and the Union, the member of the Corporation, the president of the Harvard Club and of the Alumni Association, the guest of the Associated Harvard Clubs at great gatherings in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, but as the erect, alert, quick-eyed, pleasant-voiced old man, who talked to them when they were Freshmen, at the first mass-meeting of the year. He said wise things, of course, — for he could not help being pungent, humorous, patriotic, — but precisely what he said made little difference. Perhaps the phrase by which recent undergraduates best remember him was uttered at the mass-meeting in the Union in April, 1914, when there was wild excitement about enlisting for an invasion of Mexico. "Keep your shirts on," was the terse command of Major Higginson — and he was obeyed. He stood there as an embodiment of the ancient virtues, a scarred veteran of the Civil War — like one of those "men of Marathon" in the age of Aristophanes. It was good to look at him; good to know that such men were still alive. And the last letters to be quoted in this chapter shall be the notes to Dean Briggs about those meetings for Freshmen at the opening of the college year.

September 6, 1912.

MY DEAR DEAN: —

I have your letter of September 3d. Who can resist your letters? Of course I shall come out if it will do you or the College any good. But it constantly comes up to me what my wisest friend said to me twenty years ago: "You are all right,

and what you said was well enough" (it was the speech about Soldiers Field), "but now do not get into the habit of orating. It is a very bad habit." I can go up and sit on that platform and smile; but when you, Charles Eliot and Lawrence Lowell talk, I am not wanted. However, there are very few things you can ask of me that I shall not do, and I shall go out.

September 27, 1912.

MY DEAR DEAN: —

Thank you for your letter of September 26th. I enjoyed the evening at Cambridge very much. Lawrence always talks very well, but, as you say, he never talked better than he did the other night. It is the best audience a man can have, excepting always that it is so deadly still while a man is speaking, and no expressions during the speech. But even that is probably best. As for Mr. Eliot, he will remain unique, and his advice is very sweet and good, and his way of putting the case convincing. He never speaks when I do not enjoy it very much. Dean Yeomans impressed me very favorably. He has a fine, strong face, and his words were the same — and that was a fine boy who spoke, too. As for my own part, I always think that I can state my case well, and always find that I do state it ill. As my wife said long ago, every thing that I say or write is spasmodic and lacks connection. What one's personality is to others, no man can judge, and I always am glad to be welcomed. But, thinking over my words, I saw that they were not to the point, and that the ideas did not move together. Earnestness, hard work and thinking of others is the whole story; but I do feel sure that we are in troubled times and can only get out of them by a joint and also individual effort; and no man or woman can begin too soon.

July 21, 1916.

DEAR DEAN: —

I have been away, so your letter has been neglected. I shall hope to be with you to speak to the Freshmen if it does them any good, but I can see very little reason in it.

October 9, 1917.

DEAR DEAN: —

I have your letter.

It seems to me next Monday would be a good time. Only I wish to think over what to say — what topics to take up. One gets so tired of one's own thoughts that it is not easy to think that other people are not equally tired. Place? Time? How long a talk? Can I sit down? Gossip? Chat as with you?

SUNSET HILL, MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

August 11, 1918.

DEAR DEAN: —

Will you tell me when and where the reception of the Freshmen of this year will be held? I always care to be present and see the lads — which does *not* mean that I am to talk to them.

If you are as tired of my words as I am — that part will be left out. But I like well to hear you and the President speak to them.

Forgive the pencil, but I am laid up in bed.

WESTPORT, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW YORK

Sept. 20 [1919].

MY DEAR DEAN: —

Your bidding to the Freshmen meeting has just come — by wire.

I am here on a vacation and Judge Cabot is here also. I will go down, if you like and think it worth while (for my words are worn out and few) and *if I can*. . . .

I can leave here at noon and arrive in Boston (North Station) at about 8 — and go to Cambridge. If I could turn up at 8.30 or so, would it do?

I *can* go the night before, but thus lose a day here.

Remember that my services to Harvard to-day are very few and so don't scruple to answer frankly. At this time *any* service which anybody can yield is a debt of moment — which must be paid. You have time enough to write me at the above address — or you can telegraph or telephone.

Time of meeting — place of meeting — need of me. You could not count on me before 8.30 P.M.

Play fair — remembering that I shall speak very few times, for my age is — long.

That speech of September 23, 1919, was his last. His age was "long" — but his memory among Harvard men will be longer.

CHAPTER XII

COMRADE AND CITIZEN

The nobler a soul, the more objects of compassion it hath. — FRANCIS BACON.

Don't grow rich; if you once begin you will find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. Don't seek office; but don't "disremember" that the useful citizen holds his time, his trouble, his money, and his life always ready at the hint of his country. The useful citizen is a mighty unpretending hero, but we are not going to have a country very long unless such heroism is developed. — CHARLES R. LOWELL to H. L. H., September 10, 1864.

I was struck by Henry Higginson's high level of mental tension, so to call it, which made him talk incessantly and passionately about one subject after another, never running dry, and reminding me more of myself when I was twenty years old. It is n't so much a man's eminence of elementary faculties that pulls him through. They may be rare, and he do nothing. It is the steam-pressure to the square inch behind that moves the machine. The amount of that is what makes the great difference between us. *Henry has it high.* — WILLIAM JAMES, in September, 1906. *Letters*, vol. II, p. 261.

THAT high steam-pressure to the square inch, which so impressed William James when Henry Higginson was seventy-two, was due in part to an athletic body. The Higginsons were a tough, wiry, long-lived race. Unlike his mother, he did not "die from the over-strain." He was built too powerfully for that. The bullet-wound received at Aldie troubled him intermittently for half a century, and, as some of his letters printed in the preceding chapter confess, he did not always obey his doctor's warnings. But in spite of some physical sufferings incident to old age, and in spite of burdens that would have crushed a less robust frame, he lived to be nearly eighty-five. The Sargent portrait shows him at seventy, but the painter noted a marked increase of vigor on the part of his sitter during the subsequent decade.

Henry Higginson was one of those "middle-sized" men

whom Oliver Cromwell loved to pick for "Ironsides" material. He was five feet eight in height, and never varied more than a few pounds from 170 in weight. He had long arms, powerful legs, and a notably deep chest. He sat a horse well, and was fond of driving. Bostonians who recall the now remote "Silas Lapham" period may remember how Henry Higginson used to race horses with Greely Curtis and John Shepard on the old "Mill-Dam." His son, Captain A. Henry Higginson, notes: —

"I remember very clearly my great delight when he came to me one day and told me that he had made up his mind to go in for breeding hackneys, and that he was going to build a new stable and import a lot of animals from England. At that time I was far more interested in yachting than in horse-breeding, but the thought that we were going to be together a lot in the summer pleased me greatly. This was in 1891, and he spent nearly all the summer at home working over his new stable. He had at that time a very able man called Mitchell, whom he sent to England with orders to buy the best there was to be found; and about September they arrived. He was as excited as a boy over them, and I can well remember the night they came down by special train from Boston and were unloaded at Manchester. Among the lot was a stallion called Enthorpe Performer, one of the most noted hackneys that ever came to this country, and a winner both in New York and at other shows.

"Everything looked most promising, and I was very much disappointed to find, when I came back the next spring (I spent the winter of 1892 in the West), that it was all given up. I don't know just what went wrong, but I do know that he never said much about it, and I know that he himself was very much disappointed at having to give it up. Father was a sportsman at heart — but he was always too busy to indulge himself that way in his early years, and I think that in later life, when he had the time to do it, he had lost to a great degree

the desire. But horses always had a very strong fascination for him, and he always sympathized very strongly with me in my racing and hunting, and did everything to make it easy for me to have that sport that he himself had never had but always wanted. . . .

"About 1900 I began to take an active interest in horses, and he was always ready to help me in any way and every way in connection with them. I remember one day that my trainer said to me, 'Mr. Higginson, your father was at the track yesterday to see General Douglas run.' I had not been able to be there myself, but father, without saying anything to me about it, had slipped over to New York and had gone down to the race-track to see my horse run. I waited to see if he would refer to the matter, but he did n't, and so finally one day I said to him, 'Well, sir, you saw General Douglas run the other day and you never told me anything about it. Why did n't you?' — 'Well,' he said, 'I don't exactly know why I did n't, but we 'll go down together next time.' I knew why, knew as well as if he'd told me. It was a funny shyness that he had, — he hated to show his feelings, — and I think he thought that I'd have made fun of him. But needless to say, after that we went many, many times together and had a lot of fun out of it.

"As my stable grew in numbers and in quality, he took more and more interest in it, and I don't believe that there were many races that I rode in myself that my father (and my mother too) were n't there, although I knew it used to make my mother rather nervous. In 1911 and 1912 I was the presiding steward at the Country Club races in Brookline, and at that time I had it in my power to take him up in the judges' stand, where he could see the races very well. At first, when I asked him to go up with me, he was very diffident about going; but after a bit he came up, and how he did enjoy himself! He was very a good judge of horses, and he used to like to stand in the judges' box and pick out horses as they

went by for their warming-up gallops. I remember one day in 1911, he was standing there with me before a race, and a very handsome gray horse galloped by. 'What is that horse?' said father; 'he looks like a good one.' I replied that he was, and that he had won the Grand National Steeplechase in New York a few weeks before. 'Why don't you buy him?' said he; and when I explained that he was a very expensive horse, he thought a moment and then said to me: 'Let's go and look at him, I'd like to see him near to.' Unsuspecting, I went down to the paddock with him and we saw the horse being saddled for his race. 'Who owns him?' said father. 'Why,' I said, 'he is owned by Tompkins, who trains for me.' — 'Ask him to come out here a minute; I want to meet him,' he said; and I did so. 'Mr. Tompkins,' said my father, 'I want that horse of yours for Alex, and I want him now. What's his price?' Tompkins told him. 'All right,' said father, 'he runs in our name and interest then'; and so he did. And it all happened so quickly that I had n't time even to draw a long breath, and he would hardly let me thank him, though you may be sure I tried very hard to do so. If that horse had won that day, the story would have been complete; but luck was against us and he was beaten by a nose, though he won many a good race for me after that.

"I only tell this story to illustrate his great generosity toward me, which was ever present through our relations with each other. I don't think any man could have had a better father, and I know that no man ever had a more generous or thoughtful one."

Major Higginson cared nothing for sailing, fishing, shooting, or the life of the woods. He was an expert axeman, however, and both at Sunset Hill and on his farm at Lake Champlain, he could hold his own with Irish and Canadian wood-choppers. He used to keep in condition, too, by driving down from Manchester, in the summer mornings, to the Beverly Farms

or Montserrat station, before boarding the train for Boston. When living in town, he liked to walk from Commonwealth Avenue to State Street. He disliked motor-cars, fought against them for years, and then one day, happening to ride in a big car that caught his fancy, he proceeded to buy two of them! But he was happier on foot. Thousands of his fellow citizens recognized that straight-shouldered, brisk, friendly-looking personage. Unlike his uncle, Henry Lee, he was not modish in dress. Yet he had his preferences: he was faithful through life to his youthful fondness for fine shirts from London and Paris and for red-silk handkerchiefs, and his straw hats ("Such a hat," notes his son, "as New Yorkers call a 'Boston' straw hat") were invariably purchased on Elm Street, off Hanover.

He was a familiar figure at football and baseball games on Soldiers Field, and liked the company of young athletes. But his vacations, whether at Manchester or Lake Champlain or in Europe, were usually very brief, and were haunted by telegrams and long-distance telephone calls. His physical salvation lay in his abstemious habits as to food, his abstinence from stimulants, and his ability to sleep. Sometimes he seemed to realize that he was growing old without ever having learned to take a real holiday. He wrote to Miss Grace Minns from Munich in 1911: —

. . . The stay in London was too hard, for the demands of work and of society, *i.e.*, seeing friends, tired me, and the British Museum, with its chill, laid me up. I am all right again, enjoyed Paris with its gallery and sights, — and also much business, — and then went to Geneva. Then for the first time I took in that I had missed *the* object of my trip — rest and nothing to do in good air. And now I wish I had stayed there and loafed. Perhaps I shall get back for a few days. The air was wonderful and the scenery, the gentle smiling landscape, most refreshing. You must have noticed that I always reach my point too late. Will it be so all my life? . . .

That Henry Higginson's home life was exceptionally happy need not be stated here. His tastes were simple, and he could never quite forgive an elderly kinsman, who once accused him of "liking to flaunt his wealth in the face of the public." Nothing could have been further from the truth. His own room was Spartan. He bought some good pictures, it is true: a Sir Joshua Reynolds, a Constable, a Turner, a Bonifazio, some Millet pastels, eight Corots, and many works by Hunt, Fuller, and La Farge. Henry Adams, in Paris, bargained with Rodin for some bronzes for Mr. Higginson, and they were ultimately delivered, after a contest in financial shrewdness between the French peasant and the Quincy Yankee which is most amusingly set forth in Henry Adams's letters. The Yankee won! Mr. Higginson bought Chinese and Japanese bronzes, but he never became a "collector." In the good old New England fashion, he bought books freely, but cared little for bindings and "editions." His eyes continued to trouble him in the evenings, but this disability brought about the pleasant habit of listening while his wife read aloud. Mrs. Higginson notes:—

" . . . He and Charley Lowell and Stephen Perkins were fond of reading poetry and prose. I remember, when Henry was quite a young man, he lent me his copy of Clough's 'Bothie' and a book called 'Oakfield,' written by one of the Arnolds, which I am just re-reading now for the sake of 'Auld Lang Syne.' I know that he read Goethe and Shakespeare a great deal in his youth. As his eyes were weak and he could not read in the evening, he was in the habit of playing solitaire, and I always read aloud to him. He liked to hear Mill's and Bagehot's Essays, but especially Bagehot's. He did not care very much for Macaulay. When I read to him in the evening it was in the books that were coming out, such as Morley's 'Recollections,' various 'Lives of Lincoln,' the series of 'English Men of Letters,' as they came out, and the 'American Statesmen' series. At one time I used to read German

to him, but of late years he had forgotten his German somewhat, and could not follow easily enough for me to continue. The last thing we read was Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing,' which he enjoyed very much indeed. . . ."

He wrote me from Manchester in June, 1919: —

To go back to my young days, I am reading "Faust" again, and like it. By the way, if men and women were willing to tell their thoughts and feelings freely, when on a stage, should we not have more eloquence, or at any rate more feeling, from man to man? We Yankees dislike to tell the story as we feel it, and only break out when the house begins to burn. Sometimes I wish to say: "Hang this self-control!"

There speaks the man who in his India Wharf epoch used to save one hour a day to read Jean Paul Richter with Charles Lowell!

"Music," writes Mrs. Higginson, "continued to be what it had always been from his youth up — a passion. Although not at all an accomplished performer, he liked to sit down at the piano and play snatches of songs, — often his own compositions, — of symphonies, or any favorite pieces. It was a pleasure to hear him. He had a very delightful touch."

I, too, wished to write music [he wrote me in 1909], studied two or three years in earnest and very hard, and wrote a few songs good enough for the fire in the grate. Disappointed! yes, but what of it? I *could* saw wood, and so have sawed. There are wood-sawers needed and they are paid well — in cash, though not in joy, unless the woodpile can light a good fire and heat mankind.

"You will have noticed in his very early diary," says Mrs. Higginson, "that his musical taste was already inclined towards Beethoven. If you were to ask me what his taste

were within my recollection, I should say Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, Bach, Brahms — especially Bach and Beethoven. He did not have much sympathy with some of the later composers, even the distinguished ones, such as Wagner, Strauss, Tschaikowski, although he liked some of César Franck's compositions." In his younger days he had sometimes grown impatient with the conservative tastes of John Sullivan Dwight, who did so much to diffuse a love of music in Boston; but now that he himself had grown old in turn, he could use Dwight's own words: "We candidly confess that what now challenges the world as new in music fails to stir us to the same depths of soul and feeling that the old masters did, and doubtless always will. Startling as the new composers are, and novel, curious, brilliant, beautiful at times, they do not bring us nearer heaven."¹

It is the old story of "Milestones": each generation rebels, conforms, and then finds itself out of touch with the new. Of the many expressions of personal musical taste in Mr. Higginson's correspondence, nothing is more characteristic than these words to Mrs. George D. Howe about Beethoven's Third Symphony: —

As to the "Eroica," I had meant to tell you how I felt about it, but it opens the flood-gates, and I can't. The wail of grief, and then the sympathy which should comfort the sufferer. The wonderful funeral dirge, so solemn, so full, so deep, so splendid, and always with courage and comfort. The delightful march home from the grave in the *scherzo* — the wild Hungarian, almost gypsy in tone — and then the climax of the melody, where the gates of Heaven open, and we see the angels singing and reaching their hands to us with perfect welcome. No words are of any avail, and never does that passage of entire relief and joy come to me without tears — and I wait for it through life, and hear it, and wonder.

¹ Dwight's valedictory in the last number of his *Journal of Music*, Sept., 1881.

That Henry Higginson's nature was deeply and sincerely religious, all of his friends were aware. He disliked forms and creeds and controversies. In 1865, while alone in Georgia, he wrote to his wife that she and her girl friends seemed in danger of "sinking into religious discussion."

If by creed [he goes on] is meant form of religion or theology, *i.e.*, Catholicism, Protestantism, — divided into Calvinism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Episcopacy, Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, etc., etc., — they have slight meaning for me and no preference in my eyes farther than this: that the most liberal, wide and charitable of them is the best. . . . As to Trinity or Unity, I cannot feel the most remote interest in the question. The Unitarian church is, I believe, more tolerant than the others, and therefore wins in my eyes; that is all.

A message to his son, written in 1892, gives the root of the matter as it lay in his mind: "He can think as he pleases about religion, *but he has got to live with other folks, and he cannot get rid of God.* The world and we all are made so, and the chap who sees it early and lives accordingly, is best off."

In a letter to Mrs. Louis Agassiz, in 1899, he speaks of himself "as one naturally hating conventions and the received rules of life and even of morality and often of conduct. Yet I know by experience the great value of these things and am aware of the folly of running a-tilt at windmills. I believe in many tenets of socialism, else Christianity would be false and the religion of humanity would die."

He was far from a regular church-goer, although at various times he attended Appleton Chapel, and had for a while a pew in Dr. Crothers's church in Cambridge. In an address to students in the Union in 1907, he confessed his own fondness for keeping outdoors on Sundays, but declared: "Church-going is a good habit; and so take it up and keep it up, for an hour in church quiets and cools us, makes us kind and thoughtful."

He wrote his friend Dr. George A. Gordon in 1911: "I rarely go to church, but am not an entire heathen, and I do know a man when I see one — as I did this afternoon." Dr. Gordon, in reply, gave him glorious absolution for his non-attendance: "I give you a free pass to the highest realms of light, if you do not go to church. Good as it is, there is something infinitely better than church-going; you have chosen the better part."

His old New England training, however, inclined him to listen to his wife's reading of a sermon on Sundays, even if he had spent most of the day in chopping trees. He liked particularly something by his classmate "Phil Brooks," or one of Archbishop Temple's Rugby sermons. Like most connoisseurs of good conversation, he enjoyed the society of ministers, — provided he could select the minister, — and his letters to clerical friends are invariably delightful.¹ Here is one written in 1912 to Bishop Brent, who had that morning exalted "inspirational idealism" above "practical idealism." Mr. Higginson did not quite agree.

BOSTON, Feb. 25, 1912.

DEAR BISHOP BRENT: —

This afternoon we have buried an old friend and comrade of the war, Edward Hall, and the service increases the comfort of the day which you began so well and warmly this morning. Of course your words were true and vital, and they go deep. It seems to me that we have not time or strength for the needed work, and for us old folks time is short, and strength less.

But to my question: Have you any special quest on hand? Once you came to me on some mutual matter, — for all your matters are mutual, — and I was glad to see you. Never since then have you been to my shop. If you have a wish which is within my reach, pray tell me. That is my errand. After all, we are trying to play the same game, or at least I hope so.

¹ His letter to Phillips Brooks, urging him to remain at Trinity Church rather than become the college preacher at Harvard, is quoted in Dr. A. V. G. Allen's *Life of Phillips Brooks*, and in Mr. Howe's *A Great Private Citizen*, reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1920.

Now another matter: "Practical idealism is a failure." Is it? Is it not the follower of "inspirational idealism," the other hand, the other half? Consider slavery. Phillips, Garrison, Channing, and Wentworth Higginson talked and talked about slavery, its sin, etc. Olmsted showed its practical — that is, economic weakness — failure. Lincoln and the quiet men of the countryside and of the factories and of the counting-room showed their "practical idealism" by wrestling against it at any cost, and paid the bill. Is not the same true in many ways?

Our nation needs education and civilization, thought of others, — as to their condition, hopes, aims, refreshment, amusement, religion, — active and unceasing thought of and work for others. Plenty of people think so and seek all these things. Is not this "practical idealism"?

In it lies the only solution of life, the only means of allaying the fever of the times; and my mates of sixty years ago who are lying in Virginia thought so sixty years ago, and their "relic" thinks so to-day. We cannot smash; God does not wish it, for it upsets his plan for the world, so it seems to me, and, therefore, we must go on in better fashion. Is this childish reasoning? Never mind — we always feel better when we are trying, hoping, wrestling and using practical idealism, don't we?

We old soldiers are sure that we might well have won at Antietam, and taken Lee's Army, body and breeches, and again at Chancellorsville, and again at Gettysburg; but we did not, and two of us old files yesterday were saying to each other that our only explanation was that God thought we had not paid the full price for our sin, and so was not willing to let us succeed. I believe it fully.

Do you know that in my youth (when I was twenty years old) our minister, Ephraim Peabody, prayed aloud in church for the slave in chains who was in our Court House and was taken away to slavery again, — and he was spanked for his rash words by a dear old citizen, an uncle of mine, — spanked

between churches, — and he stopped talking. Times are changed when you can venture on such talk in *the* conservative church of the town. Phil Brooks, my old classmate and school-mate, did not mind any "old uncle"; he was reporting the laws of the Lord. They suited him and us. Times are better, and Bishop Brent talks as he and we like.

All we men of the world can do is to indulge in practical idealism, and try to make it answer, and remember that it is according to the truth, which must prevail; otherwise, life is a failure — almost a farce.

I liked much what you said about the past being a philosopher and to be forgotten, except as it can teach us something. To me the past has little interesting; what we have done is over, and it is only the future which is really interesting. I am an old man, and regret my age only because so much work remains to be done, and I cannot do my share. . . . Never mind — when a man talks as you do, a real man must once more get into the fight and do his best. All of which is useless to you. What do you want that an old man can do for you? Do not think of answering my letter except to tell me your wishes.

Yours truly,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

It has recently become the fashion to place the "mission" of the theatre alongside of the mission of the church. Major Higginson was not modern enough for this, but he was a life-long theatre-goer, a keen critic of the stage, and a friend of many actors. Passages from his early diaries about French and German players have already been quoted. He always thought the Paris stage the best in the world: "it is the French conscience which teaches honest, careful work." He wrote in 1897: "I think Got the best French actor within my ken — better than Coquelin, or even Regnier or Samson. Madame Arnauld-Plessy was *great*, — ugly, charming, almost malign, — but great." He took a strong dislike to Mounet-Sully's

Hamlet: "It is brutal and horrid. The French may like it, but it is absolutely out of character. He wiggles over the stage on his stomach. It is burlesque."

He praised Mrs. Fiske in "Tess," but thought the play "coarse and wicked to a wonderful degree." Barrie's "Little Minister" delighted him: "Miss Adams plays her part with zest and grace. She uses her face too much — breaks it into fifty pieces and is quite absurd sometimes — but she is good."

Among the players on the Higginsons' long list of personal friends were Miss Marlowe, the Kendals, the Forbes-Robertsons, and Madame Duse. The Higginsons thought that the last-named artist was being unfairly treated by her London agents, and asked Henry James to intercede. He replied: —

LUCERNE, *May 10th*, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

It is a blessing to hear from you, and a very great pleasure; all the more in such a characteristic exhibition of your kindness. I gather, though you don't definitely say so, that you have given Madame Duse some note or word to me — which (if I reach London before she quits it, as I hope to do) will serve as my warrant for personally approaching her. Otherwise I shall be embarrassed. Her artistic fame long since reached me — and I have greatly yearned to see her; she is moreover a very good friend of a Roman friend of mine. *But*, I confess I am a little bewildered by this question of an active interest in her economical situation. I am the vaguest and feeblest of economists and men-of-business myself — don't even understand my own little sixpenny affairs — and go through life, I suspect, without having the intelligence to discover it — defrauded at every turn of *my* sixpences. Therefore I should be a broken reed for this more grandly victimized lady. But to any stray hint I *can* give her she shall be infinitely welcome. The gentleman you mention to me who is Coutts's partner will

probably have put his hand on the right man to advise and protect her. Exactly the right man *does* exist in London in the person of George Lewis — the legal providence of the cheated — of the defenceless actress, etc. If she consents I will gladly place her in relation with him. Unfortunately I fear I shall lose a part of her short visit to London — though I hope I shall not lose the whole. I am spending three months abroad and have lately come to this place to join my brother William and his wife, who have come up from Italy after their Florentine winter. . . . I will write to you of any happy contact I may have achieved with Madame Duse — whom one of my very first cares will be to go and listen to. I wish you had told me more about yourself. But I know that your "self" is simply your perpetual service to others. . . .

A second letter from Henry James follows: —

2 WELLINGTON CRESCENT, RAMSGATE

July 14th, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

Your second good letter about Madame Duse made me doubly regret that it was foredoomed I should not see her. Much machinery, in London, was set in motion to that end: I repeated my visits to her hotel; little Helen D——, who seemed practically to be "running" her (in what pie has the great American girl *not* her finger?), exerted herself laudably, etc.; but the lady remained inaccessible, unattainable. Then I was obliged to leave town before the end of her engagement (flying from the storm and stress of the London July), and everything ended in smoke. I saw her in everything she played except "Cleopatra" (which she gave but once or twice — London would n't have it at any price), but only from the stalls. She is exquisite, and exquisitely interesting, so everyone thought. Her success with the press, critics, etc., was unqualified (save by the one case of "Cleopatra"); but her houses were prob-

ably not what they were in America. This was probably partly because her prices were higher than London ever pays for anyone *it has never heard of before* (she came here unknown), and partly on acct. of the immense *concurrence* of London evening engagements at the height of the season; the concurrence too of the Comédie Française (which has been here *au complet*), the extreme fashionability of the opera, etc., at only the same price. Whenever I saw her, however, the house was excellent.

But, alas, so far from being able to "advise" her, I could n't even approach her. My own satisfaction apart, indeed, that probably little mattered, for my advice would not have been much worth. I talked of her situation (very discreetly) to one or two sage theatrical people; and they declared that she is only in a situation which *every* actress or artist is condemned to who has n't a natural (or artificial) caretaker on her own side; some husband, father, brother, friend or relation, domestic appendage, in short, acting naturally in her interest and with whom her managers have to reckon. It must be a *personal* tie; from the moment it is only a business one, this individual (in 19 cases out of 20) only cheats her too. Most actresses *have* such an appendage, and the misfortune of poor Madame Duse appears to be her strange and pathetic isolation; as pathetic as her unspeakably touching art. Only little Helen D—— "on her side"! Is it not also true that she has her own impracticabilities — through an ignorance extreme in some directions? Peace at any rate be to her memory! She is still young, after all, and there is time for her yet to win her battle! I have a hope that I shall still see her in Venice. Mrs. Gilder wrote me about her too, and I have had to confess my failure also to her. I have surrendered my London habitation to my brother William and his wife for a few weeks and, on this somewhat sordid shore, am far from the madding crowd. You probably are tasting of more refined refreshment at some balmy Beverly. At least I hope

you are; and particularly Mrs. Ida. Please give her my friendliest greeting.

Yours most truly

HENRY JAMES.

Although Major Higginson was nothing of a "clubman," in the newspaper sense of that word, he was a member of many of those pleasant dining-clubs which link Boston so agreeably to the English eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson himself had no greater happiness than Henry Higginson in the company of his friends; and there is a fine Johnsonian flavor in this note from the Major, — dated from his New York club, the Knickerbocker, — about late hours: "When I am in Boston, I want to go to bed at ten o'clock; but when I am in New York, I don't care *when* I go to bed." Is it not like Johnson's "joyous contempt of sleep" on the night when he went upon "a frisk" with Beauclerk and Langton?

And even in Boston, the Wintersnight Club, the Wednesday Evening Club, the Tavern, and "The Club," strained his ten-o'clock rule far beyond the breaking-point. He was elected to the Saturday Club in 1893, but its monthly luncheons, shifted to the hour of one-thirty instead of the original dining hour at three o'clock,¹ came at a time when Mr. Higginson was anxious to close his desk at State Street, and get home — for Saturday was the only day of the business week when lunching at home was possible. Nevertheless he came to the Saturday Club frequently. The table, in his day, had grown too large for much general conversation, and sometimes he has been known to declare that the Saturday Club was dull. That depended, however, upon one's luck in being seated next to good tête-à-tête talkers, and few men who ever sat by Major Higginson thought the club a dull affair. Many of his intimates upon the Corporation and Board of Overseers were members. President Eliot sat at the head of the table. James

¹ Edward W. Emerson, *Early Years of the Saturday Club* (Boston, 1918), p. 22.

Russell Lowell once set a bad example to the club by utilizing the luncheon for attending to the business of Harvard College: "With me it was a business meeting. I sat between Hoar and Brimmer, that I might talk over college matters."¹ Henry Higginson was occasionally guilty of similar transgressions; but even then he talked about Harvard more racily than most men talk about anything. He was proud of his membership in the famous club, and was highly concerned, in 1917, — as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, — that it should set a good example in war-time by abstaining from wine and tobacco. The wine was cheerfully given up, for the first time since 1857; but skilful parliamentary practice succeeded in amending Major Higginson's motion so as to salvage the cigars.

For thirty-five years Major Higginson was a member of the Tavern Club, and served as its President from 1899 to his death — his friends Howells, Henry Lee, and Norton having preceded him in that office. His sympathy with younger men, his natural friendliness, and his usually quick discernment of character enabled him to enter easily and joyfully into the comradeship of the club. There were times of physical weariness, it is true, when his tendency to self-depreciation made him feel out of touch. "I went for a while to the Tavern Club," he wrote in 1895, "and do not wish to go again. I'm too old and stupid." He was sixty-one, and it was four years later that he began his twenty years term as President. His personal distinction, his simplicity of manner and fidelity to noble standards in the arts, were known to his fellow Taverners, and instantly recognized by the club's guests from other American cities and from Europe. He worried a great deal about his speeches, as always; but it was quite needless. There are some men who can violate every recognized rule of after-dinner oratory, and every rhetorical law of "unity, mass and coherence," and nevertheless make an admirable impres-

¹ Quoted in *Early Years of the Saturday Club*, p. 75.

sion; and few persons who watched Major Higginson preside at a Tavern Club dinner wished him to be other than he was: picturesque, ejaculatory, intimate, illogical, noble, whimsical, reckless — and delightful.

"His nature was without disguises," the club recorded after his death. "He endeared himself to us by his soldier-like bluntness and directness of speech, by his disregard of conventional estimates of men, by his amazing simplicities. A man of the world, in the best sense, he was nevertheless wholly without sophistication. His love of beauty was unaffected. He had no pretences. He never betrayed bitterness, except toward hypocrisy and cowardice. He had known pain and sorrow, but he kept unspoiled, to the age of eighty-five, a zest for life, the heart of youth and the gift for friendship."

There is good reason for thinking, however, that Major Higginson was really more at his ease at the small dinners of "The Club," on the first Friday of the month, than he was at the Saturday Club luncheons or in the high-backed President's chair at the Tavern. "'The Club,'" he wrote in 1902, "'is far and away the most agreeable and interesting club here, like the old Saturday Club in its great days and much beyond it at present. The talk is often brilliant — nothing which is not discussed.'"¹ Readers of William James's "Letters" will remember his interest in this "Friday" Club. Henry James was also a member, as were Howells, Henry Adams, Alexander Agassiz, James M. Crafts, John Fiske, John C. Gray, Francis

¹ ". . . I think you will agree with me that one hears the best talk in the town at our little club. Certainly one hears the freest interchange of thought, for the Saturday Club is clever enough, but men do not say all that they wish to, and they do hesitate to express themselves with absolute freedom. In the old days [of the "Friday" Club] it used to be great fun to hear William James and Wendell Holmes (the Judge) spar, or at any rate excite each other to all sorts of ideas and expressions, and John Fiske (though rarely present) was illuminating, while John Homans you remember. John Ropes, too, never hesitated to attack or defend anything which came up, and he was as reckless as he was courageous, and no humbug ever found place with him. . . ." — H. L. H. to James Ford Rhodes, Dec. 27, 1906.

Parkman, Arthur G. Sedgwick, and John C. Ropes. Mr. Higginson outlived these companions. Among the more constant attendants in his later years were his friends Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow, George A. P. Duncan (now the Earl of Camperdown), John T. Morse, Jr., Thomas Sergeant Perry, Raphael Pumpelly, James Ford Rhodes, Moorfield Storey, Dr. H. P. Walcott, and a few younger men. There were rarely more than six or eight present, and "general talk" was the rule. Henry Higginson had his favorite seat, on the left of John T. Morse, Jr., — who sat at the head of the table, — and opposite James Ford Rhodes. In the years when Mr. Rhodes was writing his Civil-War volumes, and John C. Ropes was living, the Club talk was rather likely to touch upon military history. But with John Fiske or William James or Judge Holmes or Raphael Pumpelly present, the topic might be anything conceivable. For twenty-five years William James's letters to Henry Higginson are full of references to "The Club": —

October 13, 1893. I am hungrily waiting for the October Friday dinner!

January 1, 1901. [From Rome] If you go to the Friday Dining Club, pray give my love to all those men of genius, wit and character. I should like to hear them talk!

February 8, 1903. You left too early Friday eve.

April 6, 1908. It was a real grief to me to have to cut last Friday's dinner, but I had no choice.

January 4, 1909. The dinner was a disappointment Friday night; the conversation kept steadily on too trivial a key; if you had been there, it would have maintained a somewhat more serious level. I missed you greatly.

Some dinners, of course, were bound to be less sparkling than others. Even John Fiske sometimes remained silent,

hour after hour, and William James himself has been known more than once to sit taciturn and abstracted throughout a Friday dinner, and then to talk like the most voluble and wonderful of Angelic Doctors all the way out to Cambridge! But though some of Henry Higginson's oldest friends had gone, he maintained his eager interest in "The Club" until the close. The last words of his last letter to me, eleven days before his death, are these: "X is to dine with us on Friday. Come and cheer him and show him how pleasant we all can be."

Major Higginson's fidelity to old army comradeships was constant. For more than forty years he was a member of an Officers' Club that dined once a month during the winter, holding the final meeting invariably on the anniversary of Lee's surrender. There were nineteen original members of this organization, all of them Boston men. Charles Francis Adams, Charles L. Peirson, Greely S. Curtis, Theodore Lyman, and Henry S. Russell were among the number.¹ Major Higginson was also a regular attendant upon the meetings of the Loyal Legion, and upon regimental reunions. He enjoyed particularly the reunion of the Second Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, at their old camping-ground at Brook Farm, on July 8, 1911, fifty years after the regiment left for Virginia. A couple of notes addressed to Dr. Lincoln R. Stone of the Second Regiment will show the warmth of Major Higginson's feelings toward his surviving comrades, and his ever-present thoughts of the dead.

Dec. 1st, 1907.

DEAR LINCOLN: —

Your very kind note on my birthday was very welcome indeed — for old comrades and friends are few and dear.

Do you know that the memory of past deeds is less interesting than the hope to accomplish other deeds — so much

¹ The Boston *Sunday Herald* of April 4, 1915, gives an interesting account of this club. Colonel Robert Hooper Stevenson is now (1921) the sole survivor.

needed. As the country grows older and the requirements of many people are so much more complicated, the need of active, honest brains is greater — and we are growing feebler.

I sometimes think of the clear and simple minds which have left us.

Charles Lowell and Stephen Perkins were clear, keen, comprehensive, and Bob's simple and sound; Jim Savage's honest and earnest — and they all would have helped. Roosevelt's mind is vigorous and not clear or wise — and these men would have helped him in his honest purposes. This life is queer and trying, but we must work and think and try to be honest and faithful.

Good-bye, dear old mate.

Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

What a sweet, clear, honest beauty Bob's was!

March 31, 1919.

DEAR LINCOLN: —

You are very kind to write me, and I would have replied long ago, but am still in bed, and often am not able to write a letter even by the hand of a stenographer. The truth is I get very tired indeed doing anything, and, although my recovery is marching on well, still I am eighty-four — and you are older. Neither of us should have lived so long. It is a great mistake to live after seventy-five.

It is a good while since we started out from Brook Farm, is n't it? — And since that time we all have been through a good deal. Jim Savage was a very unusual man. One could not call him remarkable; but a most disinterested, true, steady friend — and a more unconquerable foe I never saw. As a boy, he never was afraid of anything, and he would tackle any job or any man, no matter what the size of it was. I always hoped he had a quiet end, but I suppose we never have known. Because his brother-in-law — Professor Rogers — was a Vir-

ginian and had friends in Virginia, I believe Jim was well cared for.

Is n't it marvellous to think of the difference in our preparation and our equipment and that of the present day! . . . Next summer I hope to see you all on August 9th, but one never knows. . . .

As one studies Henry Higginson's enormous correspondence, one comes to the realization that his usefulness to the community is to be measured, not merely by this or that splendid or long-sustained act of munificence, but by the boundless energy with which he threw himself into multitudinous causes, and the sympathy with which he entered into the lives of an extraordinary variety of men and women. He was no humanitarian in the abstract, and he left abundant record of his dislike for the society of professional "reformers." But back of every good cause he saw a living person — a person for whom something ought to be done. He writes to Miss Grace Minns in 1910: "The number of folks who are to be smoothed, admonished, touched up, is wonderful — and now I've a word for Senator Aldrich about the currency; so good-night."

He was one of the men who like to keep letters, and he used often to tie them up in bundles marked "Interesting," without attempting to file them by authors or topics or any system whatever. One of these bundles, opened at random, contains letters from eighteen different men, and the names of the writers, together with the topic of each letter, will give a vivid illustration of the range of his correspondence. The letters are from Bishop Brent, about his work in the Philippines; Bishop Phillips Brooks, about talking in public ("Yes, it is good to talk, but sometimes one grows weary of himself and gets glimpses of how weary other people must be of him"); James Bryce, on Jews; J. M. Crafts, on the Institute of Technology; George A. Gordon, on church-going; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, on the family genealogy; Baron Kentaro Kaneko,

giving thanks for courtesies; Major J. R. Kean, about a Charities meeting; Charles F. McKim, on the interior of the Music Hall; Frank D. Millet, on the American Academy in Rome; Cardinal O'Connell, on Christianity and the working-man; Auguste Rodin, a bill for bronzes; Theodore Roosevelt, on the currency question; Elihu Root, on the United States Treasury; Augustus St. Gaudens, on the Shaw Memorial; Charlemagne Tower, on his interview with the Kaiser over Dr. Muck's leave of absence; Booker Washington, on a Tuskegee meeting; Leonard Wood, thanking Mr. Higginson for his contribution to a Cuban school at Santiago. And all of these gentlemen, together with thousands more, were duly "smoothed, admonished, touched up" by the indefatigable Major.

Goldsmith once remarked that he could "play on the German flute as well as most men" — implying, it is supposed, that no one really plays on the German flute very well. Major Higginson could dictate to a stenographer as well as most men, if not better, and yet his most characteristic letters were written with a quill pen, and preferably upon little square correspondence cards. He used these cards, particularly in his later life, for his countless messages of remembrance, sympathy, or congratulation. He inherited from his father an iron memory for anniversaries of every kind, — birth-days, wedding-days, anniversaries of deaths, — and his notes to a very wide circle of kinsfolk and intimate friends reveal the happiest faculty for saying the delicate and right word. As long, for instance, as Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell lived, Mr. Higginson rarely failed to write her on "Charley's" birthday, their wedding-day, the anniversary of his death, and the birthday of their daughter. He had a special gift for writing charming notes to women. Many of his wife's best friends were his also, and he addressed them with a touch of chivalry, of quaint poetic grace and gallantry, unexpected in a New Englander, and inimitably his own. "Attention to a woman is sunshine," he once wrote to a kinsman who was

about to be married. "They all need sunshine, steady sunshine. . . . All men are queer, and in their aims great and little forget their wives. Your head gets into the clouds, and in your wish to serve *man*, you forget *men and women*. Show A. to all of us who are living twenty years hence, and if her face is as peaceful as her mother's, you will get the prize — which then you will not want."

An earlier chapter has touched upon Henry Higginson's theory of letter-writing. It was something that interested him continually. One of his partners notes:—

"He had an extraordinary power of statement — both verbal and written. In fact, his letters are as unmistakable as a Rembrandt portrait. Once he came to a newly opened office and addressing the young partner in charge said, 'I would like to talk to you about letters; I talk to the President of Harvard College about them. I told him that nowadays our young men can neither write nor spell. You get over the difficulty of chirography by typing, but the fundamental trouble is that the men are not taught to express themselves. Now, my theory of a letter is this: you sit down and visualize the person you are addressing; you dictate exactly as if he were present; you watch the changes in his face and anticipate his replies. You put yourself into the letter exactly as if you were looking him in the eyes. You go through and cut out all the adjectives and adverbs; then you probably have a good letter.' He added a postscript in long hand to almost every letter, which made it real and personal."

This art of personal expression had its roots in his genius for friendship, for getting acquainted with individuals. He had prided himself in the Army on knowing by name every man in the two regiments with which he served. He carried the same faculty into his business life. He wanted to learn the name of every office-boy, and all there was to be known about him.

"As he came into the office one day," says a member of the

firm of Lee, Higginson and Co., "he discovered a new boy at the door — very young (fifteen years old) bright-eyed and apple-cheeked. He stopped and said, 'My name is Higginson; what is your name?' The boy replied, 'Thomson, sir — Sam Thomson.' Mr. Higginson said, 'Good! Are you a Jew?' — 'No, sir, I am a Presbyterian.' To which the Major responded, 'I think we are fifty-fifty. I'm a Unitarian.' Returning a month later, the Major remembered the boy and his name. Stepping up to the stool where he sat taking prices off the ticker and recording them on the sheet, the Major gravely said, 'Good morning, Sam; how's the market?' Somewhat flustered, Sam replied, 'Steel is 102, sir'; and the Major passed along. Whereupon Sam strolled over to the nearest youngster, threw out his chest, and said, 'Do you know what Mr. Higginson said to me? He said, "Sam, how's the market?"' "

Another office anecdote will serve to illustrate his ability to handle young men who were not of the "Sam Thomson" type. A friend once asked him to take his son, just graduated, into the banking office, as a great personal favor. The gilded youth began as did all the others, answering the bell when someone pushed a button. Meandering into the Major's room, he was handed a telegram for the private wire signed, "H. L. H." As he leisurely departed, the Major curtly asked, "Harry, can you read that telegram? What is the signature?" Harry replied, "H. L. H." — "Do you know what that stands for?" — "Yes, sir: 'H. L. Higginson.'" — "No, that stands for 'Hurry like Hell!'" The look on Harry's face indicated that his education was progressing.

But whether it were office-boy or "gilded" college graduate, or long-time business associate, Mr. Higginson knew how to win and keep their friendship. From the scores of letters addressed to him on his birthdays, here are three, each written by a man of high standing in the Boston business world, and each expressive of an affection begun in boyhood.

"I suppose every boy at heart believes certain things, and wants to be assured that his beliefs are true. They smolder or burn brightly according to the way he behaves, and still more according to the way they are fed by the people he sees. I shall never forget how mine were affected by the talks you gave to us in college. Each time I came away my beliefs were blazing, with a perfect certainty that they were true, and an immense desire to put them into practice. And it has been so ever since. I don't mean that they have been put in practice; I wish they had; but they have come a good deal nearer than they otherwise would, and I have had a feeling of inner comfort and security which has made an immense difference in my happiness. So I am grateful to you on many accounts; and what is true of me is equally true of thousands of other boys who have seen you and heard you talk, altho' they have not had the chance of seeing you at close quarters. . . ."

"I first came into this office in 1881, thirty-two years ago. For a short time I was with the Union Pacific, but even then my relations with you were close. Looking back over these thirty-two years, I can appreciate how much your affectionate friendship has meant to me and how much I owe to you. I cannot remember a single moment when you have not been kind, considerate, and helpful. Neither has there been a time when my ambition has not been to please you. Don't think that I am not grateful because I don't say much. I am more than grateful, and I value your affection and good word more than anything else except the happiness of my wife and child. I hope you are having a happy birthday. You deserve it if anybody in this world does."

"My father died as I began to face life. From that day your care and counsel have helped me through such dark hours as came along, and made me feel that I did not lack a father's affection. It was right that this community should have ex-

pressed to you its affection. It may have felt moments of equal enthusiasm for public servants, but never such sustained feeling for a citizen because his joy was in service. To that expression I cannot add. I should only like to have you feel that since boyhood's days you have been my inspiration and joy."

Such tributes to his usefulness in the community gave Mr. Higginson the deepest satisfaction. But he had too much New England shyness to enjoy being praised to his face, unless the praise came from his intimates. President Eliot says: —

" . . . I was hurrying to the Corporation meeting one day, now perhaps twenty-five years ago, and met Major Higginson near the door of the building in which the Corporation office was and still is. As I came up to him I noticed he looked as if something very disagreeable had happened to him. His appearance was so unusual that I immediately asked, 'Why, what is the matter, Major?' He replied, 'Oh, that damned ——,' mentioning the name of a respectable citizen of Boston whom we both knew and had long known — 'Oh, that damned Jones; he has been patting me on the back right here on this sidewalk, and telling me that I have done well. He has been praising me! What right has he to do that? He and I never played together when we were boys. . . .'"¹

But his correspondence is rich, fortunately, in letters from men who had "played" with him from boyhood, and who wrote without restraint. What comedies and tragedies lie hidden even in the business correspondence of a banker who was in State Street for fifty years! Here, for instance, is a yellowing bundle of letters from and to Clarence King, the mining expert, — and expert builder, too, of castles in Spain, — the friend of John Hay and John La Farge and Henry Adams and Howells and Raphael Pumpelly. Joseph Conrad could create a romance as fascinating as "Nostromo" from these

¹ *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Nov. 27, 1919.

Higginson-King letters about the control of the fabulously rich Yedras and Sombrerete silver mines; and yet who remembers to-day the "Anglo-Mexican Mining Company" of the eighteen-eighties, and the fortunes that came and went like sheet-lightning in the sky?

Less sensational, but even more typical of those personal relationships which underlay Mr. Higginson's business enterprises, is his correspondence with the pioneer railroad-builder, C. E. Perkins of the "C. B. and Q." Henry Higginson acted as his broker, and bought and sold for his friend's account — as he did for scores of other men and women — without overmuch consultation upon details. On one occasion Higginson offered to make good a loss which was apparently due to his own carelessness, and succeeded only in eliciting this delightful reply: —

Aug. 24, 1899.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I have your letter of Aug. 23rd, and, while it is very good of you to suggest paying my losses on Wisconsin Central, I think, on reflection, that you will agree with me that it is an utterly impracticable scheme, and one which I cannot consent to for a moment.

In the first place, supposing you did buy the bonds for me without an order to do so (which I am not sure about), I nevertheless knew about it within a very short time, and could have sold out then and there, had I chosen to do so; but, as I preferred to take the chance of profit, I also necessarily took with it the chance of loss. Had I sold at once, I could, no doubt, have gotten out even, or better.

In the second place, since that time, and perhaps before, you have put me into things, or let me into things, out of which I have made money; so, if you are to pay losses on these Wisconsin Centrals, we must go through the books for about forty years, and have an accounting, and I must pay back to you,

no doubt, considerably more than you are now proposing to pay back to me.

In the third place, considering our relations for the last forty years, I shall agree to nothing of the kind, and will see you damned first!

Yours truly,

C. E. P.

I don't know what it is about accounts [confessed Mr. Higginson to William James]. It has been a great pleasure to look after yours, and it has been here a long time; but it has been a lucky account. I have had one for A for about as long, and that has been an unlucky account. I have one from B, and that has been just a fair account and no more. In one case I have bought discreetly or fortunately; in the other I have not. You, who are accustomed to study and understand the workings of men's minds will please explain this problem in psychology.

But William James, instead of attacking the psychological problem, contented himself with gratitude to Henry Higginson:—

"The diminution of care and nervous wear-and-tear and anxiety has been something for which A. and I have returned thanks weekly. It is different if one is in the fight one's self and has one's health. But I am doing, on a small stock of working energy, things of which I now believe (from evidence afforded) that they will influence the thought of the next generation (they are already stirring the puddle and making the toads jump about), and it is most important for me that that job should not be frustrated by solitudes and prohibitions of an entirely irrelevant sort to keep me awake and tire me out. I'm glad I'm not in the market life of which you describe the spasms so eloquently — I could n't stand it at all! Therefore, once more, my gratitude can find no expression in words. . . ."

That letter dates from 1909, but it is pleasant to know that, as early as the disastrous year of 1893, William James had insisted upon Henry Higginson's using that "account" as if it were his own. "I shall esteem you no true man or friend if you don't take me at my word in case hereafter you are ever pushed so that the use of that amount will make things go any easier. It is yours, not mine, for an indefinite time to come."

If James could exclaim, "How lucky I am in having such a friend as you for a banker!" Higginson could also count himself lucky in having such a correspondent for more than five-and-thirty years. It was the banker who suggested James as the orator for the dedication of the Shaw Memorial in Boston in 1897; but James, characteristically enough, rated Higginson's address on Shaw in Sanders Theatre more highly than his own. "As for our speeches, yours was infinitely the more impressive, being the work of an honest man, and not that of a professional phrase-monger and paid rhetorician. Those are the *bad* devils!" It was to Higginson that James confided his plans for resigning his professorship.

ROME, Dec. 14, 1900.

You doubtless have received, or soon will receive, as member of the "Corporation," the resignation of my professorship, which I sent in the other day, under cover to Walcott. It seemed to me that a step already made morally certain in my own mind ought not, in the general interests of the department of philosophy, to be any longer postponed. There is a cumulative amount of nervous wear-and-tear involved in preparing and delivering lectures at the sound of the bell, through so many weeks of the year, which is great and far in excess of the intellectual output proper. I can work my small intellectual capital far more economically and with more profit relatively to the animal expenditure, I am sure (no matter how greatly my strength might improve after this), by the use of the pen than by that of the tongue; so, although I am still hoping for an improvement of indefinite amount, I have

had almost no doubts as to the wisdom of sending in my resignation now. . . .

Rome is great! I can't imagine a gloriouslyer place for a man to be turned loose on after breakfast, with eyes in his head, some little book-learning, muscles in his legs, and enough money in his pocket to buy such souvenir spoons as take his fancy. I have the eyes, but too little of the other requisites. But I say Rome is great all the same. . . .

"I congratulate you on the Yale LL.D.," he wrote in 1901. "They invited me, unworthy as I am, to come and receive one, but my health forbade."

In the following year it appears that James managed to "escape" a degree from Harvard:—

". . . As I have frequently said, I mean to support you in your old age. In fact the hope of that is about all that I now live for, being surfeited with the glory of academic degrees just escaped, like this last one which, in the friendliness of its heart, your Corporation designed sponging upon me at Commencement. Boil it and solder it up from the microbes, and it may do for another year, if I am not in prison! The friendliness of such recognition is a delightful thing to a man about to graduate from the season of his usefulness. 'La renommée vient,' as I have heard John La Farge quote, 'à ceux qui ont la patience d'attendre, et s'accroît à raison de leur imbécillité.'"¹

Among the thousands of ingenious and pitiful and shameless "begging letters" received by Henry Higginson, what a veritable human document is the following from the hand of William James!

95 IRVING ST., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Nov. 1, 1902.

DEAR HENRY:—

I am emboldened to the step I am taking by the consciousness that, though we are both at least 60 years old and have

¹ This letter has been printed in *Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 173.

known each other from the cradle, I have never but once (or possibly twice) traded on your well-known lavishness of disposition to swell any "subscription" I was trying to raise.

Now the doomful hour has struck. The altar is ready, and I take the victim by the ear. I choose you for a victim because you still have some undesiccated human feeling about you and can think on terms of pure charity — for the love of God, without ulterior hopes of returns from the investment.

The subject is a man of 50 who can be recommended to no other kind of a benefactor. His story is a long one, but it amounts to this, that Heaven made him with no other power than that of thinking and writing, and he has proved by this time a truly pathological inability to keep body and soul together. He is abstemious to an incredible degree, is the most innocent and harmless of human beings, is n't propagating his kind, has never had a dime to spend except for vital necessities, and never has had in his life an hour of what such as *we* call freedom from care, or of "pleasure" in the ordinary exuberant sense of the term. He is refinement itself mentally and morally; and his writings have all been printed in first-rate periodicals, but are too scanty to "pay." There's no excuse for him, I admit. But God made him; and after kicking and cuffing and prodding him for twenty years, I have now come to believe that he ought to be treated in charity pure and simple (even though that be a vice), and I want to guarantee him \$350 a year as a pension to be paid to the Mills Hotel in Bleeker Street, New York, for board and lodging and a few cents weekly over and above. I will put in \$150. I have secured \$100 more. Can I squeeze \$50 a year out of you for such a non-public cause? If not, don't reply and forget this letter. If "ja," and you think you really can afford it, and it is n't wicked, let me know, and I will dun you regularly every year for the 50 dollars.

Yours as ever,

WM. JAMES.

It's a great compliment that I address you. Most men say of such a case, "Is the man deserving?" Whereas the real point is, "Does he need us?" Who is deserving nowadays?

Another correspondent, whose letters ranged from the stock-market to things undreamed of in State Street, was Henry Adams. His letters to Higginson begin in 1863, but those written in the twentieth century are the most characteristic. Adams had discovered by 1901 that the world was "sick."

HÔTEL BEAU SITE, PARIS, 4 Nov., 1901.

. . . I was in London last week; not a gay place just now, and much worried about the world. In fact, I have found the world pretty sick on my travels. Whether it is acute or chronic may be a question, but to my mind the German sickness goes deeper than the skin; I never could believe in German economics or German business as I've seen it carried on. When we were young, we never conceived of the Germans as possible rivals in practical matters. The collapse shows how exceedingly unpractical their expansion was. I believe the shipping expansion to be still worse. Both in Germany and in Russia the governments alone are carrying the industrials. Russia is what she has always been and, for at least three generations more, must continue to be; but Germany must root or die. Which? Her history is not dazzling.

For the last month you have been worrying Paris and London, not to say Berlin, badly with your copper. On high moral principles, I deeply disapprove of the way in which our people seem to have rigged the copper-market; but I am greatly interested in watching the struggle. For two hundred years Europe has clubbed her capital to rig markets against us, and now comes a first-class fight to see who has the biggest pile. Apparently Paris is with us, and, as far as I can see, France and America have all the money there is. I am sorry that I know none of the Rio Tinto people, to ask questions.

Still I do wish we could let prices down easily a little all round. Capital is terrifically strong and can now safely do things that would have been fatal fifty years ago; but all the same, bumps are almost as unpleasant to fear as to feel.

Europe and her embarrassments are going more and more to dominate our home issues; at least, to threaten our markets. At Washington they see it clearly enough. There is no great danger unless someone in Europe runs mad; but that may happen. In fact, England is mad already. Chamberlain's speeches show very clearly a failing mind, and Salisbury is long passed. I begin to look for a social collapse; perhaps a revolution. The old aristocracy and the new middle-class leaders have all broken down. They are discredited to a point that would be fatal in America. Luckily or unluckily, all England is senile with them. No young energy is left. . . .

Here is the opening paragraph of the nine-page letter about Rodin, referred to on a previous page: —

PARIS, 12 July, 1902.

MY DEAR AND LEARNED FRIEND: —

To you, who have dealt with artists all your life, there is no need to explain what artists are. Your friend Rodin is an artist. I am an irritable cuss. Yet, guided by the genial influence of your character, I've not quarreled with him, though I must now explain to you how very close I have been to breaking off relations. Still, down to the present moment, we are prodigies of courtesy. He is not in the least dishonest; he is only a peasant of genius; grasping; distrustful of himself socially; susceptible to flattery, especially to that of beautiful or fashionable women; and just now much elated by his personal triumphs in London and Prague. He is perfectly buzzy about his contracts; keeps no books or memoranda; forgets all he says, and has not the least idea of doing what is promised. If it were not that his marble block is in his way, I doubt

if he would ever remember to get it out of his way by executing an order. . . .

By 1902 Adams is toying with that theory of acceleration which he was soon to work out in his "Education of Henry Adams."

INVERLOCHY CASTLE, FORT WILLIAM, N.B.

14 August, 1902.

. . . For once, the whole world seems as dull as Scotland. I suppose America is working as hard as ever, and piling up wealth, but no one seems any longer surprised at America. I see nothing to prevent the next generation from quadrupling its activity and sixteen-folding its wealth; but as I am not in it, why should I care? One thing I hold to be mathematically certain. The world can't go on another century doubling up speed and power as it has done since 1800 without breaking its own neck. I shall be pleased to see if it comes in my time, for it can't hurt me much; but it will certainly wake up somebody some day if the skies suddenly fall. . . .

I hear not a word about politics or politicians. Politics ought to be the science of leaving things dexterously alone. On the whole our Government seems well adapted to do it. We have some annoyances caused by A——, but they are slight, and we know what they are. We don't know what the next will be. As for me, I have long since learned wisdom in big lumps and I've got it down to as fine a point as old what's-his-name did who burnt the Alexandrian Library. Wisdom is Silence. . . .

By the following year the search for truth brought Adams "as far as Ming porcelain."

1603 H STREET, 26 April, 1903.

. . . I have regretted to lose a visit from you this winter, but I suspect that you are wise in keeping away. For myself,

I am humbly seeking truth. You have found it. My search has brought me only as far as Ming porcelain. I have derived much pleasure from the jar which stands since January on my corner book-case, and looks me in the face with every sincerity of truth. I wish I may say as much of Sargent's portrait.¹ I wish still more that you may say that it lives you. The jar lives me. . . .

Two years later, just before the adjournment of Congress, he is puzzled about the world — and Wall Street. This was the year when he wrote the "Education."

1603 H STREET, 26 Feb., 1905.

. . . . We shall all flit as soon as we've tucked dear Theodore into his little bed. Don't you wish he may go to sleep! Nobody seems to mind him, which amuses me. Who is the fool here? Is it Wall Street or Theodore? Is it the Jews or the Tsar? When we were young, everybody would have had fits at a quarter part of what we have had to stand this year past. I wonder whether a general war all over the world, with a total collapse of industry, would stir Wall Street now. . . .

In the following letters, he refers to the privately printed copies of the "Education," now ready for circulation among his friends: —

1603 H STREET, 17 Feb., 1907.

. . . Truly I should squirm at having to recommend a teacher of law,² but I will ask better and wiser men than myself what to do about it. The danger is of catching a prig. International law, like Art, is a wild world of priggism. Never should a cautious historian wish himself therein. He respects no law.

¹ H. L. H. was then sitting for the portrait now in the Harvard Union.

² For the Harvard Law School.



HENRY L. HIGGINSON

From a photograph by Notman (about 1905)

I have much missed you in matters of wise advice, for I have needed someone to teach better things than law. . . .

As for me, I am very, very old; so old that I can't help telling about it, and becoming more of a bore than when I was only young. I have even written it out, and mean to ask you some day to look at it, as my last words of imbecility on man and matters. I have seen Calumet sell at a thousand, and the roads choked by their own food. Figure up that equation on Calumet! Some forty years ago Quin Shaw was using his last dollar to *carry in* at nothing. If the figure stands thus: 1:1000: : 1000: X, what is to happen in the year 1947? . . .

1603 H STREET, April 1, 1907.

. . . The volume, or rather the sheets of the possible projected book would have been sent to you earlier, for your consent or correction, had I not been obliged to wait for the permission of persons more seriously affected, such as presidents, senators and ladies. I am still waiting for a few belated *beleidigte*, the chief of whom is Mrs. Hay, still in California; and the State Department, dumb as beetles. Nevertheless, I regard you as one of the family, and therefore entitled to your will. For my personal interest, the book is written only for the last three chapters. I doubt whether your personal interest can carry you much beyond the first three. In any case, I will correct, erase or deny anything you dislike, even to suppressing the whole if you say so. It is not likely to suit my successors at Harvard. . . .

25 AVENUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE

27 May 1907.

. . . I received also, and read, the volume of Charley Lowell.¹ We are piously embalming our friends in mummy-form; and I wonder whether any archæologist of the year 3000 will decipher them. Let's hope they will find amusement in

¹ This was the *Life and Letters*, edited by Edward W. Emerson.

it. For myself, I am very much more interested in the future, and I think Charley Lowell was of the same mind. He was a 1900 man, and we are very short of such.

You and Alex Agassiz are the only ones of our Boston lot who have accomplished anything, for I don't count the mere running with the machine. I suppose the war killed two or three more, who might have rivalled you, and Charley Lowell may have been one. But would he have lived long anyway?

Paris is a terror, a dream of chaos. I stay here because I have no other to go to; but it is rather worse than New York. And we thought our Paris of 1860 a fast place! Yet the women adore it more than the men do — and the automobile — and the restlessness! Read me that riddle ahead for sixty years more! It is the only book I care to study now. . . .

At the end of Roosevelt's administration Henry Adams writes (February 25, 1909): "With March 4 I quit the game. All ends! Next winter, my world of Lafayette Square will have vanished, and I will let you run the show." A year later his tone is still that of affectionate, whimsical detachment: —

1603 H STREET, 3 *Feby.*, 1910.

. . . From time to time, nieces or other stray vagabonds give me hints of your doings, and they have told me that your health had been poor. I am sorry for it. . . .

Every day I hug myself with delight at the thought that you young fellows, and not I, are running the solar system. As you are all so cocksure of running it right, I can look on and tell you what nice fellows you are and how nicely you are doing it. If I had been left to myself, I never would have known how to do it so well. I don't know that I would have done it even with the help of my brothers and first cousins.

I am still smiling — like Charles Eliot — and hope you are too. There is nothing like smiles. . . .

But the death of Alexander Agassiz, on March 27, 1910, stirred him beyond his wont.

1603 H STREET, 2 April, 1910.

. . . I wish I were there to show what respect I could for Alex. If I showed all I felt, it would be worth while to go far. He was the best we ever produced, and the only one of our generation whom I would have liked to envy. When I look back on our sixty years of life, and think of our millions of contemporaries, I am pacified when the figure of Alex occurs to me, and I feel almost reconciled to my own existence. We did one first-rate work when we produced him, and I do not know that, thus far, any other century has done better.

I feel as though our lives had become suddenly poor — almost as though our generation were bankrupt — by his loss. He stood so high above anyone else on my horizon that I can no longer see a landmark now that he is gone. To anyone else except you I should have to explain all this feeling, but you know how true and natural it is, and I can leave it so. . . .¹

Dr. Weir Mitchell was another friend who was deeply moved at Agassiz's sudden death. He wrote to Henry Higginson: "The friends of my past years are dropping around me like the leaves in autumn, but although, as one nears the fatal rifle-pits, casualties multiply and death becomes familiar, the passing of so vitalized a spirit as Agassiz gives one a more than usual sense of mortality."

¹ This letter has been printed in the *Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz*, p. 447.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PUBLIC SERVANT

Personally I know no better example of the useful citizen portrayed by Charles Lowell than he whom we meet here to-night to honor. But he is much more than a useful citizen. He is a great public servant. He has never held office; he has never desired to; but he has been a great public servant in the highest and largest sense. Every year and all the years have been marked by service to his country, to his state and to his fellow men. On the battlefield and in the sheltered city, in unending charities, in the encouragement of art and the advancement of learning — wherever there was a good cause to be found, there has his service been rendered. — HENRY CABOT LODGE, at the dinner in honor of Major Higginson's eightieth birthday, November 18, 1914.

THAT personal quality which colors the letters of William James and Henry Adams is not lacking in the ample section of the Higginson correspondence which deals primarily with public affairs. Henry Higginson personalized most questions, and his letters about political, social, and economic issues are as vivid as anything he wrote. He had distinguished correspondents in these fields, and their views were frequently the opposite of his own. Never was his contact with other minds so rich and varied as in the epoch-making period that began with the Spanish-American War in 1898 and ended in the summer of 1914.

Before passing to this group of letters upon public affairs, it must be remembered that Henry Higginson was, by taste and habit, a private citizen. He had slender interest in the national game of party politics. Walter H. Page used to say that Americans cared in reality but little for politics as such; that their interests were primarily economic and social, and that they were compelled to use a machinery originally designed for political ends, — and now out of date, — in order to bring to pass their economic and social desires. Higginson

shared to a considerable degree this distrust of politics and politicians. In March, 1867, he wrote to his father: "It seems to me as if no man in Congress really *knew* anything about taxes or finance. Any able, well-informed man could teach the whole crew something. Surely men enough in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or the Western cities could instruct them." Carlyle's "Cromwell," which he had just been reading, is not more contemptuous of parliamentary wind-bags. And over forty years later, in an article in the Boston "Herald" (December 28, 1918), he is still repeating his dislike of legislation: "Let us ask Congress to do their work in their own way and let us [business men] do ours in our way."

He was typically American, likewise, in his combination of Hamiltonianism and Jeffersonianism. Fervently and sometimes fiercely patriotic, an advocate of a "strong" government, a central banking system, the gold standard, and the rights of "property," it was chiefly in his disbelief in a protective tariff that he parted company with Hamilton. Yet he shared Jefferson's ardent faith in the common man, the "plain people." He wanted to have the Federal Government keep its hands off the private citizen as far as possible. Decade after decade he fought the steady encroachment of governmental supervision and control of transportation and industry. He wished to be let alone. No man desired more passionately the happiness and freedom of his fellow citizens; but to much of the Progressive legislation enacted under Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, he gave but tardy and reluctant assent. It is easy to say that he was illogical; yet it is precisely by this illogical blending of the ideals of Hamilton and of Jefferson, this Yankee dexterity in swapping moods and methods as successive emergencies arise, that the Republic has maintained its life.

On the main issue of the Spanish-American War, Henry Higginson had no hesitation. His ancestor Francis Higginson,

who was a small boy when the Armada sailed, could not have blazed more hotly against Spain than Major Higginson. He raised the money for the equipment of the Harvard Battalion. He writes to his kinsman Henry Cabot Lodge, just before the battle of Santiago: —

KNICKERBOCKER CLUB, *July 1st, '98.*

NOBLE SENATOR: —

The President has done little to be criticized, but one thing troubles me. He should have, at the outset, called for 250,000 men. They were sure to be needed, and in any case would have been in training — a most needed process, which only time can give. And now I wish he'd put 100,000 more men into camp — U.S. volunteers in U.S. and not in State Regiments — and then give these new U.S. Regts. to trained U.S. Officers. Why not?

Griffin is getting a very fine set of 'enlisted men — so he tells me and so I see. Within a few days two Harvard students — Livermore's son and Stephen Higginson, son, grandson, great-grandson, great-great-grandson of Stephen of the Revolution — have enlisted in the regiment as privates. Had to! Could n't help it! We of '61 got commissions, and these boys go us one better and enlist! God! I believe the whole country would enlist if need be.

Here I sit in the dude club — sports — loafers — athletes — dandies — raised in cotton-wool — a rose-garden — scoffers — what you please — a little club — and 40 men have already gone — 11 per cent of the club, which has many *old* men as well as young. Twenty seniors of Harvard College and many of the older schools are in the service, chiefly privates.

At Commencement Charles Eliot, in reply to Charles Adams, spoke out warmly and said, "In '61 I knew well and saw daily the men who went into the service and now I see daily the young men here — and I declare that these men of to-day are moved by the same feelings and motives as those," — and

the audience cheered him as he said it, — and I noticed that day that every mention of the war, etc., was rec'd with the same spirit, by the *old* men and young, and the audience was much more old than young. It is wonderful — wonderful!

Of course, I, like an old fool, feel so, and long to go into the service, and Jim Hig, too. But I'm struggling with the Hospital Ship and begging for money with all my wiles. Tell X to send to Draper \$5000. I'm treasurer, but she hates me.

My profound respects to the President, whose name here draws cheers, and tell him to call *very* liberally for troops *now* and train them — as a benefit to the nation — a great benefit. He'll get all he asks, and while it makes me cry to see these lads go, I wish them to do so, as an education. By the Eternal! It is our country and we are here to guard and help it. Call at once and largely! Too many if you please.

Senator Lodge replied: —

U.S. SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON

July 3, 1898.

DEAR HENRY: —

Whether I am a "noble senator" or not, your letter was a very noble letter, and I felt a choking sensation in my throat as I finished it. It would have been well to have called for 250,000 men at the start, and I think that they are considering a 100,000 more now. We have a bad business at Santiago and must send a lot more there.

It is most splendid and most uplifting the way our boys are going in everywhere, and it makes one love the country better than ever. I want to go, but I should be a fool, I suppose, and only fill a place some younger man could fill better, while here I can be of some use. . . . It is a righteous war and inevitable. Spanish despotism and our free government could no more continue side by side than freedom and slavery. I send a mite for the hospital ship and will write to X.

The difference between Henry Higginson and a host of men who shouted "Remember the Maine" was that he remembered also the sick and wounded and the education of the Cubans for self-government. A few lines from notes to his wife will give a hint of his activities.

August 19, 1898. We sent cooks, food, etc., to Montauk Point, and also a good physician. The need is great and we must patch up the invalids. . . . Hollister of the Law School has just died of wounds, poor boy.

August 22. It has been a confused and hot day again, for the camp at Montauk Point is full of sick and convalescent, neglected soldiers, whom we are trying to help. I was to have gone to Maine with several great R.R. men to-day, but gave it up because these sick men need help. It is horrid.

August 23. Still busy with the soldiers, 200 of whom were landed here [Boston], very ill.

October 28. The Bay State came in late to-day, and G. and I have seen her unloaded: 133 convalescent and sick, 19 on stretchers, and two dead. It was most interesting and painful, and as for those nurses and doctors, they are wonderful.

After the war was over, it was Major Higginson who raised the money for a model school at Santiago, and he was largely instrumental in sending the 1500 Cuban teachers for a summer session at Harvard. No wonder that these teachers, as they filed up to shake his hands, shouted, "*Viva Señor Higginson, el amigo de Cuba!*"

On the vexed question of the retention of the Philippine Islands, Major Higginson inclined to the opinion of the Anti-Imperialists, among whom he had many friends. Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell wrote him eloquent Anti-Imperialist letters, but even these pale before the following paragraph from William James: —

NAUHEIM, *Sept. 18, 1900.*

. . . I read your political observations with respect, and see how you are professionally bound to resist Bryan. But I pray for his victory none the less. There are worse things than financial troubles in a Nation's career. To puke up its ancient soul, and the only things that gave it eminence among other nations, in five minutes without a wink of squeamishness, is worse; and that is what the Republicans would commit us to in the Philippines. Our conduct there has been one protracted infamy towards the Islanders, and one protracted lie towards ourselves. If we can only regain our old seat in the American saddle, and get back into some sincere relations with our principles and professions, it seems to me it makes very little permanent difference what incidental disturbances may accompany the process, for this crisis is one which is sure to determine the whole moral development of our policy in a good or a bad way for an indefinite future time. . . .

After the election Major Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge:

November 12, 1900.

I think many wise thoughts about the election and believe this thing, that if a good and able Democrat of high character had been put up, Mr. McKinley would not have been elected, which simply means that the country has not been satisfied with the Republican administration in regard to foreign parts and that, in my judgment, you have got to remodel a good many things and put that and Cuba on a quieter basis, leaving the inhabitants to manage their own affairs, or else you will go out of power next time.

The following summer he wrote to another friend: "Holding Manila was a mistake." Yet later, when Cameron Forbes, the son of his comrade Colonel William H. Forbes, and the grandson of his old friend John M. Forbes, was appointed

Governor-General of the Philippines, Major Higginson wrote to him: "It is a call from your country and you cannot refuse. Even if you should not return, we should mourn you, but we should be glad you had done the right thing. Go, and an old man's blessing be with you."

When Governor Forbes's health was impaired by his labors in the Islands, and many friends urged his return, it was Major Higginson who exhorted him to stick to his post. In no letter has he put more of his philosophy of life.

November 22, 1910.

DEAR CAMERON: —

. . . To begin almost at the end: I cannot go to the Philippines because I am always sick at sea or, if not sick, wretched, and because it is no rest for me at all. Next, I am really an old man, and my wife would not let me go without a doctor, for some break might come on board ship, as with Alex Agassiz. I should very much like to see the Philippines, but shall never go farther than Liverpool again, and then soon after that to Mount Auburn, or such other point as may be designated. . . .

Now, as to yourself: Ralph said to me once: "It is all very well for Cameron to work out there, but supposing he dies in the service?" My reply was: "Very good! What better can a man expect than to do as good service as Cameron has done and is doing, and to die in harness?" The world will have got full value out of you, and you will have got full value out of life, and that is what you were made for. Many of us would be very sorry if you did not come home to rejoice us with your presence, and that you might enjoy your laurels; but if you die in the service, you will only do what many a good fellow has done again and again in the Indies, in this country — in peace, and in war. What's the odds? I thought you had a great chance, and you have used it admirably. If you were my boy, I should feel just so, and I should mourn your death or

broken health, and I should feel very proud of you. I do feel very proud of you now.

Every now and then, your grandfather Forbes used to talk through his hat. He once told me that he did not wish his sons to do anything except enjoy life and have boats and horses, and I did not believe a word that he said, nor do I now. Your father died in the harness, having set agoing one of the wonderful companies of the world,¹ and he gave it a tone that it has never lost. I think he got all the "change" out of life that a man could have, and, if you add to that his own disbelief in his ability as a business man, I think you will see something pretty fine. He has left as good a name as your grandfather, he did quite as good work. Your grandfather did work at high pressure, and again and again came very near breaking down, but he accomplished so much with his enormous energy and courage that I regard his sufferings or his collapses from over-strain as of no consequence. I believe in toiling terribly, and the only thing that I ask of my body is to give me the power to work and work until I drop. In this modern world there is so much to do, so many places to fill, so many errors to correct, so many men and women to help, that one's own comfort or pleasure seems of no consequence.

I hope that you will not leave your task, but will stay there until you have got the Islands on a much higher basis than at present. It is most interesting to note what you have been at, and it is also consoling to see that you know enough to make others work, and to do as little as possible yourself. Charley Perkins said long ago that the head of a great corporation should have nothing to do but sit and watch; that he should have no work, and then he would have more than he could do. You are in the same position. It is your duty to keep as well and as fresh as possible, and to make others do everything that it is possible for them to do. Never mind about the honor, the credit or anything else — it is honor enough to

¹ The American Bell Telephone Co.

accomplish the task which you have undertaken. Your mother has gone out, and will be glad to fetch you home, and I hope she will not succeed. I should much like to see you again before I die (there is no sign of the funeral yet), but I want to see you fill that position as well as now for some years. It is a tremendous task to undertake; it is a great chance for a full-blooded man — and if you show your power to do great work, you have got to do it. That is the rule of life, and you neither can nor will dodge it. Of course it is not necessary to work at fever heat, or be as nervous as a witch, as your grandfather was; but the remembrance of all such moments in his life is as nothing compared to the great satisfaction and delight which he and all his friends felt in what he could accomplish.

Stay where you are, and keep at it! Keep as well as you can, and remember that you hoped for this place, and your friends hoped for it on your account. May I repeat that, if a man shows himself able to carry a load, he has got to carry it. Now, this talk is not hard; it is merely recognizing the conditions of a very restless, eager period of history, in which men are looking all around to see what may be done and what is to come. If you were here, you would be in a fever, just as we are; if you are there, you may find your life more peaceful than here. . . . If my letter reads like a sermon, pray remember that it is only because I wish you every good, and because I believe you can accomplish a great task. . . .

As for party allegiance, Major Higginson was a Republican with somewhat frequent lapses. He went with the Mugwumps for Cleveland against Blaine. He had a horror of Bryan and his free-silver heresies. He voted for McKinley in 1896 and 1900, for Roosevelt in 1904, Taft in 1908, Wilson in 1912, and Hughes in 1916. In Massachusetts politics he was an Independent. He rarely attended political rallies, though he once presided at a meeting in Curtis Guild's campaign for the governorship. "I have always believed in free trade, or as near

an approach to it as we could get," he wrote to Cameron Forbes; and to Republicans of the "Home Market" school, of whom there are many in State Street, this was almost unpatriotic. Yet Higginson learned it from John M. Forbes and Colonel Henry Lee.

Few Americans change their general political views after they are thirty. Henry Higginson tried harder than most men to keep learning and to maintain an open mind. But his business experience of the 1870's and 1880's, during the expansion of railroads through the West, remained the formative influence upon his opinions. His natural sympathies were with the pioneer builders, who took great risks in the hope of great profits; with the far-seeing corporations that had had the patience, energy, and honesty to create gigantic industrial enterprises. Why should the Government lay its restrictive hand upon such men? When political agitators and academic economists talked of curbing "Capital," Higginson's mind flashed back to the Forbeses and the Perkinses, to "Alex" Agassiz and "Quin" Shaw, to Theodore Vail and Charles Coffin. He had summered and wintered with these men, and knew them to be honest and high-minded. Why afflict them with Sherman Anti-Trust laws, Interstate Commerce Commissions, and regulations forbidding interlocking directorates? Why cannot Congress adjourn and leave us in peace? Presidents and law-makers are disturbers of traffic, troublers of Israel.

For, after all, who are the most useful citizens of the American Commonwealth? Higginson and C. E. Perkins once debated that question. Here are the views of the railroad-builder, and Higginson, at bottom, agreed with him.

ON CAR "OLD HUNDRED" IN ILLINOIS

March 8th, 1900.

MY DEAR HENRY: —

The other day, when I ventured the remark that the men who made money were public benefactors, you said I was

talking to hear myself talk, and, as we were both in a hurry, nothing more came of it. Now, having time to spare, and always having a wish to convince you of your errors, I should like to continue the conversation.

It takes all kinds of men and women to make the world, many of whom desire to be, and a few of whom are, benefactors in some degree; but to attempt to go into the question of exactly what makes one a benefactor, and what are the various degrees of the good different kinds of individuals may do, would obviously take volumes, and this is not my purpose. But here are a few points for your consideration: —

First. It is literally true that men can live only by the sweat of their faces (Genesis 3: 19). This is true as a general proposition. The number of individuals who live without work is so small, compared with the working millions, that they are of no account. This is true among civilized people and among uncivilized people. Looking at the population of the world, men can only live by hard work, and most of the workers have no comforts, and, of course, no luxuries.

Second. Now, I say that they who, regardless of their motives, do something which mitigates this situation, thus giving man a chance for progress, are public benefactors. Without such mitigation of his circumstances, no other kind of assistance is of the slightest use to a man — one who is hungry and cold can think of nothing else, no gospel touches him.

Third. I say that men who do something to lessen the cost of living are the only ones who do mitigate this situation; and

Fourth. I say the men who successfully improve, organize, and make use of the means of production and distribution, or help others to do so, are those who do lessen the cost of living.

Fifth. It is clear, as a rule, that men do not obtain something for nothing, or for any less than the something is worth. So, for what men acquire, they must give value received. Therefore, if men acquire much, they must give much, and if

much or little is acquired, by improving the means of producing or distributing the things which people wish to consume, those who acquire it are public benefactors.

Sixth. Furthermore, I say that as a rule they who acquire most, through successful improvement and organization of the means of production and distribution, whereby the cost of living is lessened, are the greatest public benefactors, because they do most to mitigate the hardship of life, and to make progress possible. What they acquire is the best possible measure of the value of what they do. Other benefactors are secondary.

What do you say?

C. E. PERKINS.

Seven years later, in Roosevelt's administration, the railroad situation was in one of its many acute phases. Higginson corresponded voluminously with the President, and drew some vigorous replies,¹ from which a single quotation must here suffice: —

February 11, 1907.

The present unsatisfactory condition in railroad affairs is due ninety-five per cent to the misconduct, the short-sightedness, and the folly of the railroad men themselves. Unquestionably there is loose demagogic attack upon them in some of the States, but not one particle of harm has come to them by Federal action; on the contrary, merely good. I wish very much that our laws could be strengthened, and I think that the worst thing that could be done for the railroads would be an announcement that for two or three years the Federal Government would keep its hands off of them. It would result in a tidal wave of violent State action against them throughout three fourths of this country. I am astonished at the curious short-sightedness of the railroad people — a short-

¹ *Theodore Roosevelt and his Time*, by J. B. Bishop (N.Y., 1920), vol. II, pp. 38, 39, 82.

sightedness which, thanks to their own action, extends to would-be investors. Legislation such as I have proposed, or whatever legislation in the future I shall propose, will be in the interest of honest investors and to protect the public and the investors against dishonest action.

I may incidentally say that I think that no possible action on railroads would have as disturbing an effect upon business as action on the tariff at this time. I earnestly and cordially agree with you on the need of currency legislation, and have been doing all I can for it; but the big financial men of the country, instead of trying to get sound currency legislation, seem to pass their time in lamenting, as Wall Street laments, our action about the railroads.

And now, as a terse presentation of the views shared by Henry Higginson, take these three paragraphs from letters of C. E. Perkins to him.

BURLINGTON, IOWA, *Mar. 20, 1907.*

MY DEAR HENRY: —

. . . If you are right, that the depression will be shortlived, perhaps I have made a mistake; but I have a feeling that Rooseveltism and labor-unionism may have precipitated what of course was bound to come some day, that is, a period of rest and depression, after a long period of extravagance and over-investment. A community, or a nation, is in that respect like an individual. I told Hill last fall I thought we, as a nation, were spending more than our income, but he did not seem to think there was much in it. It is easy to destroy or impair confidence, but a slow business getting it back again. However, as my old friend Lyman Cook used to say, "the longer I live the less I know, and the more I become convinced that talking does very little good." You accuse me of sitting back and saying nothing; but how much good has been done by the talkers? Hill has been talking, and telling the truth, for

the last two or three years, but it has not produced any good effect. Twenty years ago I wrote a letter on the subject of railroad regulation; probably you never read it. In preparing it, I had the help of John M. Forbes, Charles J. Paine, T. Jefferson Coolidge, Wm. Endicott, and John L. Gardner, all sound and level-headed men, as you know. I sent that letter to Senator Cullom before the passage of the Interstate Commerce Law, and it did not have as much effect as a fly on a cart-wheel. . . .

BURLINGTON, IOWA, *March 25, 1907.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

I have your letter of March 21st. You ask what I think about federal charters for railroads? I had never given the subject much consideration, because I have never been able to see how any of the railroads I am interested in could change from the state charters they now exist under, and become federal corporations. So, even if it were true that it is easier to get bad laws in the states than it is at Washington, I do not see how we can escape from state legislation. I cannot agree, however, that the states are any worse than Congress. Indeed, all the most serious legislation against the railroads has been in Washington. The Sherman Anti-Trust Law of 1890 is probably the most vicious and unreasonable law that was ever passed by any legislative body, and there is nothing in any state that I know of, any worse than the Interstate Commerce Law and its various amendments, giving more power to half a dozen lawyers than is possessed by the Czar of Russia, and making it directly for the interest of the railroads to buy immunity from these gentlemen, when the present hysterical fit of virtue is over. . . .

BURLINGTON, IOWA, *June 18, 1907.*

MY DEAR HENRY:—

. . . I think, as I suggested yesterday, that sooner or later there will be a new alignment of parties on the issue of States'

Rights, but this may not come about before the next presidential election. All of these new-fangled statesmen, including both Roosevelt and Bryan, and the crowd of youngsters who swarm around them, are hell-bent on centralizing everything at Washington, and wiping out state lines. This situation raises a real, and, as it seems to me, the only real issue of importance upon which the country can divide. These modern philosophers contend that the general government, because of the delegated power to regulate commerce among the states, can go into a state and interfere with any or all of its police regulations which in any way affect interstate commerce. They claim, for example, that because the C. B. and Q. R. R. Co., of Illinois, being a corporation chartered by that state, is engaged, to some extent, as part of its business, in interstate commerce, therefore Congress may pass laws under which the government at Washington may come into the State of Illinois, and say what this interstate carrier shall charge, what wages it shall pay, how and when it shall run its trains, and regulate every other detail of the railroad's operation. This is too much, and I do not believe the people will stand it. It is more than a question of law. It is a question of politics, of changing fundamentally our form of government, which is based on the idea of *local self-government*."

To one who reads this correspondence in 1921, it seems clear that Roosevelt's political prescience gave him the advantage of the debate. The purely competitive era of American railroading was nearing its end, and the railroad men of the older generation could not see it.

In the campaign of 1912, while Higginson was hesitating between Taft, Roosevelt and Wilson, he wrote the following letter: —

... Theodore is the most capable man of the three, and is a very attractive and brilliant creature; but men like to

know what they can count on, and they do not feel sure that they can count on him. Theodore talks nonsense about Wall Street, where most of the men are honest — far honest than the politicians, who promise this or t'other for votes. He talks about the corporations as being wicked, which means that the directors are wicked. I have known the inside of corporations for a great many years, and I have yet to see a director who has taken advantage of his position as director. He makes no more money than any stockholder, and he gets kicks and curses if his corporation does not go on well and is not successful, although neither he nor the active officers of the corporation are to blame. It would be very easy to drive respectable men out of the corporations, and then an ordinary class of men — perhaps crooks — would come in, who might spoil the corporation or who would be pretty sure to do wrong things, including robbery.

Incorporation is the most brilliant invention of our past century, enabling everybody to have a share; and when Theodore and his mates, and Wilson and plenty of the politicians talk of the crimes of the corporations, they are simply . . . forgetting that they are cuffing just such people as you and X, who are also stockholders — and perhaps larger stockholders than any of the directors. Most directors do consider themselves trustees, and act accordingly.

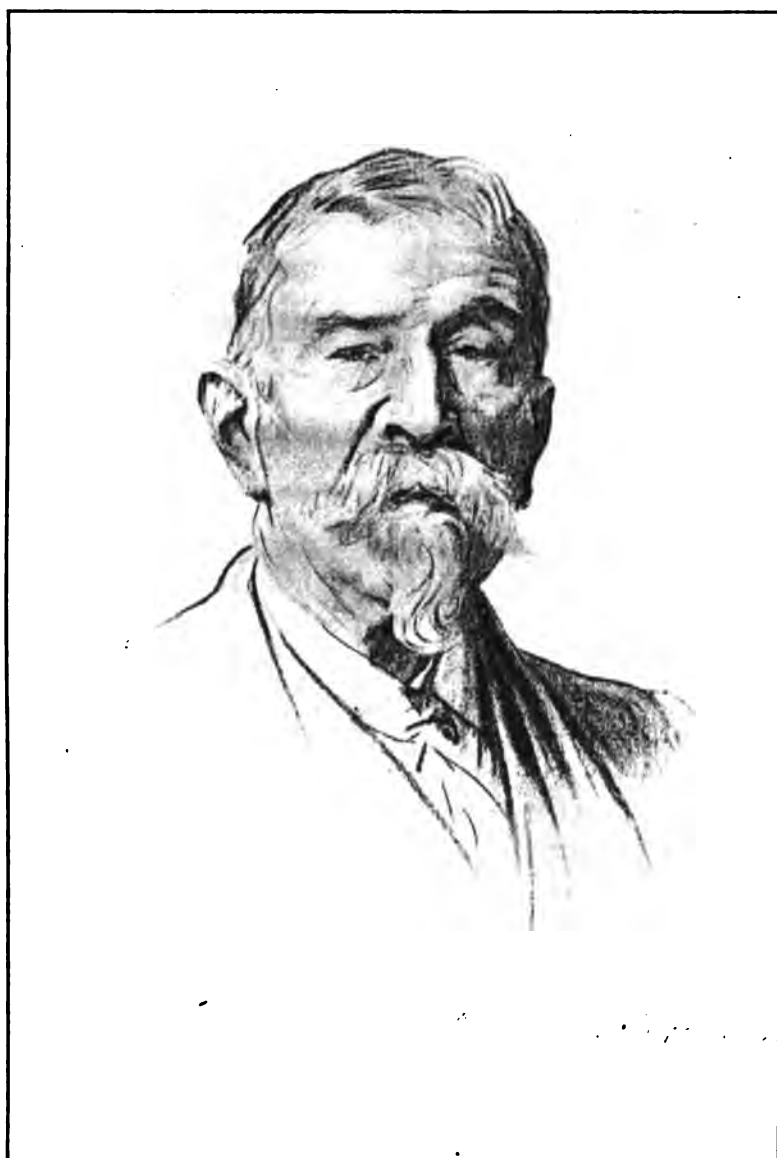
I am going to New York this week, with the thermometer at near 100, to be present at a corporation meeting. I have been in this corporation for twenty years, and have been cuffed and kicked very hard. It has had a very fine, a very disastrous, and a very wonderful life, and it owes its success to the wonderful services of its active officers and to the care and guidance of the directors. The disaster came in the break-down in 1893, when our politicians ran amuck, did not know whether the nation's dollar should be paid in silver or gold, and frightened people so much that they put their money in boxes and hid it, which in itself is a crime.

I know about the wickedness of some of our rich men, and deprecate to the last degree their accumulation of riches. Some of the great bankers I have seen and known intimately, and I can tell you from positive knowledge, that, if the great bankers had not stood together in 1907 and done the best they could for the public, you would have lost your house, we might have failed, and the ruin of the land would have been excessive. Those men did not try to make money, and they did not produce bad results, but they risked their fortunes and their health in preserving the community from terrible disaster. (I am not telling you anything I do not know.)

You have lived among a farming population more or less, and a pretty poor population, too. I do not believe there is a man in Westport or in Essex County who is higher minded or more honest than most of the business men whom I know. . . . Do not suppose for a moment that any one class of men is honest than another, unless it may possibly be the physicians and the teachers. It is very hard to be honest, it is very hard to see the other man's rights and to put one's self in the proper position toward others. I have been trying to do it for eighty years nearly, and still have to think just what is due me and what is due the other fellow.

All these things our three candidates for the Presidency ignore or are ignorant of.

As to the higher prices, they come in part from people wanting more things, in part from people working less, in part from high taxes, and in part from the increase in gold. We ought to reduce our tariff to almost nothing, and I hope we shall do it. If we break up the great corporations, we shall raise the price of everything that they produce, and, more than that, we shall put out of work a great many men who need it and a great many women who need it still more. If I could see a Presidential candidate who understood the business interests, I should be glad to vote for him; and "business" does not include us in our line or bankers or shop-keepers or



HENRY L. HIGGINSON

From a crayon portrait by J. S. Sargent (1911)

farmers or working people, but all of them. If you will think how much labor and thought and anxiety the best men in every community spend upon the care of the savings banks alone, — where they get nothing, where they cannot borrow from their own banks, where they are paid no salary, and where, in short, they have no possible advantage, — if you will think of all they do, can you tell me of anybody among the workingmen who does so much? All these facts are ignored, and the classes invited to attack each other. It is a very poor business. We shall worry through it and come out on the other side; but the men who foment that sort of thing are to my mind very reprehensible.

In saying all this, I do not at all forget what has been before me since I was eighteen years old — that we must help the working man and woman in all sorts of ways, that they must have a larger part of what is going — and I know that plenty of corporations are working that way. . . .

Dear child, I say all this to you because you are an uncommonly sensible creature, and because you can look at things as they are. Ignorance of facts with regard to our fellow creatures is a curse, and if it cannot be cured, it becomes a crime. . . .

A second letter to the same correspondent, on August 11, renews the defense of corporations and trusts, but admits that there are evils involved: —

. . . "The predatory rich!" as T. R. says. Who are they? sons of farmers, mechanics, day-laborers, etc., who fought hard for their first \$100, and so believe that they can do as they like with their millions. They never had any good traditions, never had any high fine talk and should not be expected to act well. Their successors may well do better. . . . God Almighty is looking round and lifts us along — slowly perhaps, but well. And he has made rules which T. R. forgets. By the

way, can you name one R.R. which has not had to fight hard for existence? and its stockholders have had to wait. But the public gets the benefit of the transportation — and the new country. If you say to the enterprisers, "Heads I win, tails you lose," enterprisers will reply, "Nothing doing." I saw my brother-in-law wait, work, live anywhere and anyhow to make the Calumet mine succeed — and then help the men to a share of it. . . . Men are not going to fight to keep the corporations which they direct. They will quietly sell out and leave the direction to others, who lack knowledge and character. Why not? We have seen it done and shall see more of it, if the yells go on; and in case the courts are fooled with by ignorant people, the corporations will suffer injustice. Theodore understand these things as little as Taft or Wilson. *I* should not think of pushing Taft, and do think them all three unfit. . . . I like all these candidates — especially T. R. — and would rather vote for neither. . . .

As a matter of fact, he voted for Wilson, and became a very frequent and copious correspondent of the President. Of the many topics which they discussed, the matter of interlocking directorates may be selected as typical. It will be observed that even in 1914 Henry Higginson retained his conviction of 1867, that "any well-trained business man" was wiser than the Congress and the Executive. He writes to Charles W. Eliot: —

December 15, 1914.

DEAR MR. ELIOT: —

. . . I have a letter from President Wilson, a copy of which I enclose. As you see, he sets up a doctrine which seems wrong. I wrote to him about the attacks on the interlocking directorates, as he had spoken of them, and about the great difficulty of getting directors at all if they are threatened with fines or imprisonment for being in corporations where mistakes

are made. No director can know all that goes on in his corporation, and men do not care very much to be directors if they are threatened. Further than that, a man may very well be in two or three corporations that help each other and that work together, and be much more serviceable than if these directorships were divided among three or four men. In short, the interlocking directorate idea [*i.e.*, forbidding it] seems to me often foolish. The President writes that the law is made for the men who do not go straight, and that is the point which seems to me wrong. . . .

A law directing how business corporations shall be carried on should assume that it is dealing with honest men, put proper restrictions on the acts of honest men, and trust them. The President does not trust them, nor does Congress. My own opinion is that the business men are far more to be trusted than the men in public life, as a rule. I am grieved that President Wilson does not see that a law covering a deal of ground should not be made simply to trip up great rogues. . . .

President Wilson is trying to do good in many ways, and has already accomplished much. I like the change in the tariff; I should like the income tax if it were properly imposed and guarded, and if decent arrangements were made with regard to its collection. The collection of it is as clumsy and as costly as possible. In our office alone last year we spent \$20,000 for various people in doing the needed work. Any well-trained business man could have shown Secretary McAdoo and the President the easy way to do things, and the result would have brought in more money and a great deal less temper. . . .

The trouble with the Democratic party and the President is that they do not know how to do business, they are not willing to learn from business men, and they are willing to assume that their [own] methods are better, and that they are honest. Any fairly well-educated business man knows that both claims are ridiculous.

Every now and then I write to Mr. Wilson, and always get a very pleasant reply. . . .

The letter from the President was as follows: —

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON

December 10, 1914.

Personal

MY DEAR MAJOR: —

Your letters always stimulate me, and I thank you sincerely for yours of December seventh.

I think I realize, perhaps too keenly for a man of action, that there are two sides to every question, and sometimes two sides of almost equal weight. I know, therefore, the inconveniences and drawbacks arising from the enforcement of some of our recently enacted laws; but, after all, laws have to be made for those who do not go straight, and undoubtedly there has been a very wide-spread abuse of interlocking directorates and of the many other arrangements by which men are permitted to arrange, not only their own business, but the business of those with whom they are dealing. After all, the best that the law can do is to thread its way carefully amidst difficulties and be careful to keep on the right side of some obvious line.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

Four days later, Mr. Higginson stated his views once more to President Eliot, with increasing dissatisfaction with the political situation: —

December 19, 1914.

. . . As to the interlocking directorates, I have no doubt that there has been some trouble from them, and in many cases they should be avoided. May it not be more safely left to the business men, to the business sense of the community,

to correct that evil? And when we are considering, should not we consider all the great advantages that come from interlocking directorates? My trouble with Mr. Wilson and his Cabinet is that they do not understand how business should be done, and of course some of the methods of the past fifty years have not been sound.

I agree entirely with what you say about the income tax, for it is a great deal better that everybody should feel the pressure. Mr. Wilson, so far as I am concerned, is ready to discuss things and is frank. . . .

The farmer is the bottom stone in our country and every other country. You and I blush when we see that our spring wheat averages eleven bushels to the acre and England, Germany and France raise twenty-five to thirty-five bushels to the acre. We are a slovenly people.

I sympathize with the efforts of the Wilson Administration to curb some of the great powers, but in doing so they have frightened people to such an extent that they will not undertake what they should undertake. They do not wish to go to jail, they do not wish to be fined, they do not wish to be published, and, not knowing what they may do, in many cases they do nothing. It is not good for the nation, it is not good for the laborer, it is not good for anybody. . . .

He continued to write at great length to President Wilson, — as he did to Secretary McAdoo and other members of the Cabinet, — and invariably received his "very pleasant reply." But on September 7, 1915, he confides to Senator Lodge: "You know how far my words will go with him [the President] — that is, no distance at all."

Upon the whole, as the foregoing correspondence makes clear, Major Higginson approached politics from the angle of economics. His article on "Justice to the Corporations" ("Atlantic Monthly," January, 1908) repeats his customary defense of the "enterprising, able, thoughtful men" who

have built up the corporations — with illustrations drawn from the record of his own associates. He concludes that "The Nation and our legislation can safely trust the ruling Wall Street men. . . . Cease all hard words about the corporations and capitalists."

This was a brave and sincere argument, but one not calculated to convince the skeptical, or to soothe the bitter sufferers from social injustice. This is clear from the seventeen replies printed by "The Survey" for February 7, 1914, to Higginson's article, "Consider the Other Fellow," in the same issue of that magazine. The "other fellow" was the abused capitalist, whom the Major defended loyally. The replies were courteous, but two sentences from Dr. Crothers summed up a fundamental divergence in view. "It does not follow," wrote Dr. Crothers, "that, because a man has shown great ability in the accumulation of wealth, he is a good judge of what is best for the masses of the people. The people have begun to insist upon judging for themselves."

These printed articles in defense of corporations are distinctly more conservative than some of Major Higginson's letters and conversations. He wrote to Mr. C. A. Coffin in 1911:—

. . . I also have certain views about corporate managements, which do not entirely agree with those of other people. I do think that the corporations have been rather too eager, just as certain rich men have. It is perfectly natural in the struggle to succeed, and still more in the effort not to fail, — as we (G. E.) came near doing in '93, in the desire to do good work, and to prevent others doing mischief, — that we should have become too eager, and have forgotten other people who are either stupid or inefficient; and we sometimes forget our workmen or our competitors. I do not believe that, because a man owns property, it belongs to him to do with as he pleases. The property belongs to the community, and he has charge

of it, and can dispose of or use it, if it is well done and not with sole regard to himself or to his stockholders. If you will think a little while, perhaps you will agree that my views are not radical, or rather revolutionary at all; it is merely injecting morals and religion into daily life — and they belong there, and form a part of our conduct, and must guide us. . . .

He addressed some college students, at this period, in the same vein: —

. . . Pray bear in mind that any large work which you build up, be it a factory or a railroad or anything else, is not yours absolutely. It has been done for the world and done with the help of the world, which has after all aided you and given you your education. No matter how large a work you have done, it belongs to the world in a measure; and the more you can draw your helpers to your side, the more you can make them feel that it is "our" mill or railroad, and not "mine" alone, the stronger you will stand. . . .

Major Higginson had written to Professor Taussig, as early as 1894, "We must meet the social questions more than half way, or be beaten." Yet he never ceased to think that the "economists and the regulators" were unfair toward the capitalists who were willing to take risks. He wrote to Professor Taussig on March 16, 1913: —

DEAR TAUSSIG: —

An old man gets up early, for he has little time to spare — a few months or years at the best. It is 7 o'clk Sunday A.M. I have been reading the records of the American Economic Society last autumn, and note your remarks and those of Carver, as well as others. In a discussion of prices for necessities, and especially public-service corporations and their just reward or return, not a word is said of the fool who risks

and loses money in sundry experiments, and who succeeds in a few. Hear my sad tale: I have been putting money into a well-studied experiment to make magnetic iron out of ore at a much lower cost than at present. With several friends, I have spent \$60,000 or more. It is a failure. If it had been a success, it would have reduced the cost of pig-iron or magnetic steel four or five dollars a ton.

Think of that for the world!

Next: I am doing the same with a new battery, and that question is not yet solved.

Next: I am doing the same with a process for making alcohol from chips, and probably that will succeed.

A lot of us took up the Submarine Signal Company some twenty years ago, and have spent \$1,750,000 of real money on it. The company is eminently successful, but never has made a penny of return; it has saved lots of lives and property, and the whole joy of it is in that fact. That \$1,750,000 twenty years ago with interest would amount to about \$6,000,000 at the present time.

Some idiots — . . . Bill Forbes, Cochrane, Vail and I — risked our money on the Telephone in a dream of '76 or '78. . . . This time it was "trumps" — and think of the blessing to the world!

Some unwise men bought Calumet shares in 1865, sweated terribly until 1870, and then got a dividend. Many of them were afraid to acknowledge the ownership of these shares. The mine has paid about \$120,000,000 in dividends.

I have a string more of these things if they are of any interest. Almost every railroad in the country has failed because built too soon, and the original men have lost their money. I bought Chicago and Northwestern at six dollars, and Jersey Central at about the same. The latter is in the three hundreds, and Chicago and Northwest has been over \$200. . . .

If our country is to grow, through developments, the "econ-

omists" and the "regulators" must allow for the losses in risks, else we shall get behind countries which do allow for brains, character and ability; that is, they must allow for extra dividends. I certainly have got rid of \$500,000 in experiments — and I am about as much of a fool as most men, and no more. . . .

Carver speaks of vanity as a motive, and he is right in a way. What does our office care for and work for most? — vanity — that is, the name of selling only reliable goods; and, to reach this point, it must study and spend a great deal of money. Every now and then it makes a mistake and has to pay for it by lifting lame enterprises out of the mud or carrying them through a panic. This firm has been in existence about sixty-five years, and certainly has lost some millions of money in lifting and carrying; and also to gratify the vanity of never failing to pay a loan on time, and getting ready to do so a month beforehand. Long live vanity, *i.e.*, character!

The "regulators" leave this sort of thing out of their calculations — that is, the determination to win by deserts, and keep character. It is the one and only sure asset and is worth the whole world. . . .

Of course, if we had better public officers, we might get better results out of regulations, but we should also lose our own sense of responsibility and of thought as to our own actions. . . . But public ownership is the greatest folly extant. You or I can run a railroad or a factory better than can our State House or any of its inhabitants.

But, to return to my beginning: when the economists are reckoning the large profits made on this or t'other transaction, let them also reckon the mistakes. Somehow or other, the Lord made us, and allows us to make mistakes, and he brings the thing out pretty even. . . .

If we insist that the leading men of the Nation shall behave more quietly and generously to their fellows, we shall, by slow degrees, build up a better sentiment, so that men shall be

ashamed of many things which to-day may be done, just exactly as business men will not now venture to do things which they did freely thirty or forty years ago.

If you were not the best fellow in the world, I should not bother you with such a long screed, but I cannot help watching you and Carver and listening to you. . . .

Professor Taussig replied, March 20, 1913: —

"You are absolutely right. Risks and losses must be reckoned as well as prizes. Every real investment of capital involves risks, and the rate of return necessary to induce lending by the man who is virtually guaranteed against losses is by no means sufficient to induce the actual investment by the man who gives the guaranty. It is perfectly true that the general public too often wants to eat its cake and have it too; or, to put it in other words, wants to play the game, heads we win and tails you lose. When an enterprise is in its inception, the immense majority will have nothing to do with it; when that same enterprise happens to have been carried through the period of risk and difficulty to the stage of success, that same majority wants a handsome share of the profits. . . .

"If you have nothing to do *next* Sunday morning at 7 o'clock, turn to a certain work by a Harvard Professor on the 'Principles of Economics,' and look at volume II, pages 90-91 and 93-94, also page 467. You will see the element of risk is not entirely neglected by the economist. . . .

"Nevertheless, I believe it is true that in a considerable class of ventures the stage is being reached at which the losses will be *very much* outweighed by the gains, if there be no sort of public regulation. I quite admit that public regulation, administered by the kind of public officials we get too often, is a dangerous thing. I suspect the bow just now is being pulled too taut the other way; but some degree of oversight, and of curtailment of gains unnecessarily high, must be faced. . . ."

Major Higginson's most effective preaching on public affairs, however, was not in the field of politics, or of economics in the narrow sense, but rather in the discussion of the obligations of rich men to the community. Here he had the immense advantage that lay in the public's knowledge that he practised exactly what he preached. His "Hint to the Rich," published in the "Atlantic" for March, 1911, was the most widely discussed of all his utterances. He had long been aware, of course, of what he called, in a letter to Charles A. Coffin in 1905, the insolent power of money: "Anyone who has the luck to gain money must feel the insolent power of it and the misuse of it in giving it away. So a person of any modesty often prefers to hide the name of the giver. I lie about it now and then." He began the "Atlantic" article with one of his favorite quotations, the motto cut on the gravestone of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire:—

What I gave, I have;
What I spent, I had;
What I kept, I lost.

After defining "success" as service, and illustrating it, as was his wont, by the ideals of some of his friends, he admits the existence of envy and jealousy among the crowd. "The man who has not made speed in the race thinks hardly of his favored mate. He forgets the self-control, the ceaseless toil, the constant thought which his old companion has used, while he has gone to a ball game or a bar or simply smoked his pipe after a day of work. He ignores the differences in ability. He forgets, too, the failures which may have preceded success." Yet it is these strong "enterprisers" who have built up the country and enriched themselves. Let them now seek contentment and peace of mind by aiding others, and especially by giving to the cause of education, "the key-stone of civilization." The rich man should give away all his fortune during his lifetime. Examples of such generosity "would soothe

men's minds and counteract the sense of injustice." The best social insurance would be this sense of mutual good-will.

There were many replies to this article. Representatives of "labor" made the obvious retort that the splendid generosity of a Rockefeller and a Carnegie had not soothed in the least "the sense of injustice" over the economic conditions that had made the Rockefeller and Carnegie fortunes possible. Even Major Higginson's English friend, William R. Malcolm, a partner in the Coutts banking house, makes a keen criticism of Higginson's thesis:—

LONDON, *May 4, 1911.*

. . . I return your copy of the "Atlantic Monthly" with your article, which is very interesting. As an exhortation to the rich, it is very useful and I fancy would apply more to your country than to Britain, because I believe the general diffusion of wealth is greater here than with you. I wish that the rich in both countries were more and more penetrated with the spirit you inculcate. It is an expression of the true spirit of Christianity. But I doubt whether you can look to it to allay the spirit of discontent among the poor at present. There is jealousy of the power which wealth places in a man's hands quite as much as of the possession and inequality of wealth. The rich man says, "I will do this or that good work with my wealth"; but after all it is *he* who does it and orders it.

Of course there ought to be Charity and Christianity of feeling among the poor towards the rich, as well as *vice versa*, and this ought to lead them to appreciate the work of the rich on their behalf; but we can hardly look for this at present. I think we must work for a better general distribution of wealth leading to fewer rich and fewer poor. Free Trade and graduated Income Tax will do something in this direction. If we could raise the bulk of the people to a condition of independence and tolerable prosperity, the antagonism of classes would vanish. . . .

But Major Higginson was unconvinced. At the annual dinner of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, on December 15, 1911, he asked leave to speak, and in one of the most earnest and skillful of all of his addresses urged Mr. Carnegie to even more lavish generousities: "I for one should be glad to see him carry out his expressed wish to die a poor man, but this is impossible. He may strip himself of his pennies, but he will live and die rich in blessings." One of his fellow trustees wrote thus about the address: —

"I am not going to let this occasion go by without the personal satisfaction of now saying what was in my mind when I was listening to the noble and characteristic words you spoke the other evening in Washington. You addressed your words to Carnegie and the company, and they evidently were most effective — but the man who embodied all that you held up for a copy was yourself; you have done all that you invite others to do — and have done it with a simplicity and sincerity which add a quality to the giving, of higher worth even than the generous gifts themselves. One of the crowning satisfactions of my life has been my association with you — and the fact that you call me friend. May I long see that face and hear that welcome voice."

As one reflects upon the number and variety of Major Higginson's appearances before the public, both as speaker and as writer, after he had passed his seventy-fifth birthday, the more amazing seems this record of physical and mental energy. Instead of slowing down, as men usually do, he speeded up. He writes chaffingly to Senator Lodge on March 21, 1911: —

DEAR CABOT: —

I suppose you think you are an orator, but just look at me! I am to preside at Dr. Grenfell's meeting this afternoon, and make a beautiful speech; I am to go to a performance of a dramatic association and make a beautiful speech; am to

speak at the Harvard Club in New York next week, and am employed to write for the newspapers obituaries, etc. — and you are not in it with me. To be sure, people like to hear what you have to say, and they do not care about my words, but they seek me, and they pass you by. When I made my first speech at Cambridge about the Soldiers Field, Charles Perkins warned me against orating, and he was right; and it was a sad day for me and for all my hearers. . . . I am going to Europe on the 5th of April, in the *Mauretania*. . . .

He had become a Boston "institution." Newspapers liked to interview him. The curiosity of the American public about any rich man is insatiable, and Major Higginson usually found something picturesque and forcible to say to a reporter. He attended "hearings" on all sorts of public questions. He served on endless committees and boards. His shrewdness and humor and record as a fighter made him admired by the masses of his fellow citizens of Boston — over three fourths of whom, by 1900, were of foreign parentage. This old army officer knew precisely how to "hit it off" with Irishman and Hebrew, negro and Italian. They spoke of him as a "blue-blood," and properly enough; but they had the instinct to see that he belonged to what Carlyle called the "working aristocrats." He was fond of saying that "the workman ought to have a bigger piece of pie"; and though he was disinclined to pass the workman the knife and ask him to help himself, the laboring men of Boston would nevertheless cheer for Major Higginson when they would cheer for no one else. They knew that he meant to play fair, though he played by the old rules.

There is one clause of the Book of Common Prayer which Major Higginson could never have repeated with much unction: "Grant us minds always contented with our present condition." "Schiff told me," he wrote President Eliot, "that he was content, and wished nothing more. I do not believe in sympathizing with that mood, unless it is for money. Why

be content?" And he wrote in the same vein to Miss Ruth Draper: "This eternal progress and regress and progress again seems to be the most cheering thing in our lives here. I've always been saying to myself, '*What next? Come, move on. This is good, but what next?*' How can we be ever content?"

Yet, though contentment was denied him, the decade from 1904 to 1914 brought him much happiness. He had occasional illnesses, it is true, and some keen anxieties. His circle of intimates was broken more than once by death. Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell died in 1906. The deaths of Alexander Agassiz and William James in 1910 were followed by that of James J. Higginson in 1911. "Major 'Jim' Higginson is so straight that he leans backward," it used to be said in Wall Street. He was the first of George Higginson's children to pass away, and he was seventy-five. Merry and modest to the last, a prosperous banker, the President of the Harvard Club of New York, his name still brings an affectionate smile to the faces of the men who knew him.

Major Higginson's relations with old and new friends were never more delightful than in this decade. "Rock Harbor" — his summer home in Westport on Lake Champlain — was filled with a succession of lively house-parties. The Higginsons captured many friends as they were going or returning from the Adirondacks, and the "Putnam camp," not far away, gave them agreeable companions. Two stout volumes of "Rock Harbor Journals" keep the record of the house guests for thirty years — with poems and sketches that are full of gayety and charm, but are too intimate for transcription here. "Sunset Hill" at Manchester was likewise known for its gracious hospitality. It was a "House of Kinsfolk," as the Russians say, but it welcomed also many a stranger.

Some of Major Higginson's most faithful friends were Englishmen: John White, Esq., General Sir George Higginson (a kinsman), Sir William Farrer, William R. Malcolm, Esq., and in later years Mr. Higginson's partner, Sir Hugh Levick.

He repeated at intervals his visits to hospitable country houses in England. He had many friendly correspondents on the Continent, particularly among musicians and artists, and great French and German bankers. His own marriage had helped to make him something of a cosmopolitan in feeling, and after the Hague Conferences he had for a while a strong hope of some form of world-organization that would lessen the chances of war.

Nothing is more charming in his correspondence of those years than the letters from old companions, looking back upon the past. Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve, the great Greek scholar of Johns Hopkins, who had first met Higginson when they were fellow students in Berlin in 1853, wrote on October 21, 1911:—

BALTIMORE.

DEAR MAJOR HIGGINSON:—

As soon as my daughter¹ arrived, she gave me your letter, which I was glad to receive as a birthday gift at her dear hands rather than by the common carrier. Our paths in life have had three significant crossings, in Berlin, in Cambridge, in New Haven, at the Bendemann dinner, then more than forty years afterwards at Lane's funeral, at the Yale Bicentennial; times of aspiration, of sorrow, of honor. Well, it gives me unfeigned pleasure to be told that in your eyes my long career seems to match that first success which appealed so strongly to your youthful imagination; and as for the younger of the two young men, whatever your hopes and aims were in 1853, you can now say with Victor Hugo, "J'ai fait ce que j'ai pu, j'ai servi"; and when I think what you have been able to do and what high service you have rendered, no life seems to me better worth living than yours has been.

With sincere thanks and best wishes, I am

Yours faithfully

BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE.

¹ Mrs. Gardiner M. Lane.

Horace Howard Furness,¹ the Shakespeare scholar, had written in 1901:—

. . . Our circle seemed once so large, and now it is dwindled down to but little more than you and Blight and me — oh, for a moment I forgot Binney, with whom I still keep in touch, and who seems still to bear a charmed life.

Indeed, indeed, but I was disappointed over missing you when I was in Boston town. What would n't I give for good old gossip with you. I think we should behave like fools. I know I should. Do you remember a way you had of suddenly plumping on the floor with a force that would jar any frame-built house in New England? — and then how we'd all roar with laughter! O time! what times! And do you remember the exalted pride with which you sent me from Vienna a hair of your moustache to prove its extraordinary growth? I'd not swear I have n't that hair yet. Is it not written in the book of Fate, dear boy, that we shall meet and have a good wholesome laugh over those days long syne, and not postpone it to the fields of asphodel? And, Johnny's^a gone! he whom we all looked on, after Charley Lowell, as the man of genius in our class (you know we all claimed you as of *our* class of '54). "I feel chilly and grown old." But your affectionate letter warms me. Do it again — when the spirit prompts. But whether it prompt or not I shall, all the same, remain *in secula seculorum*,

Yours affectionately

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

His last letter, undated, but not long before his death in 1912, ends thus:—

¹ "He was the last of my mates to call me 'Higgy.' In college he was merry, earnest, studious, warm — but one would not have guessed his fine career. After the war and years more, I went to his office. He looked at me and did not know me. I smiled, and he said, 'Dear me! Your smile in your eyes tells me. It is Higgy!' Thank God for such friends." — H. L. H. to B. P., June 7, 1919.

^a John C. Bancroft.

. . . Before long, when balmy spring days visit us earlier than they do you, then, oh, then do you and Ida just come hither and let us live over again some of the old days and gossip till the cock is crowing aloof. I live very quietly, and 't will be a lettered day of the very brightest red if you'll only come.

It's long past midnight and I must creep upstairs. Inasmuch as I remember Ida when she was a little girl, with her hair brought round in a braid above her forehead, playing with the Felton children, I think I may venture to send my love. Withhold it if you wish, but don't repress your own huge share from

Yours ever and ever and the day after,

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

One of Colonel Charles Francis Adams's last letters to Higginson surveys both their lives stoically: —

January 12, 1912.

. . . You say of yourself that you regard your own life as "a miserable patchwork." It would by no means be so regarded generally, or from the outside. The only difference between a successful man and a failure is, as old John L. Gardner remarked, years and years ago, that the successful man is mistaken only two times out of five, and the unsuccessful man is mistaken three times out of five. Few men, I take it, ever got to our point in life without looking back, and, in view of the mistakes they have made, wondering that they ever got through at all. I am sure it has been so in my own case. As I review it, my mistakes in life were fully three out of five. The only thing was that I was lucky enough to have the two out of five which were not mistakes redeem the other three. What I have accomplished, as compared with what I ought to have accomplished, seems to me a very patchy sort of outcome. However, as Bob Stevenson very sensibly remarked, it is for us only to "thank God it is no worse." . . .

Among Henry Adams's last notes to Higginson is this undated one from Paris, whither he had gone "a seeker of the Lord, praying for light; a worm crawling towards the asphalt in a spring rain; a pilgrim, very seasick, looking for the harbor of Paris": —

Wed. noon

23 AVENUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE

MY DEAR HENRY: —

I will come for you at any time, to take you wherever you wish to go, — shopping, sight-seeing, visiting, to drive or to feed, — if you will fix an hour, and let me know by any legal form of notification, — except the telephone, which I have not. But I fear it will bore you if I insist. I am old, decrepit and a bore, and pride myself on being it all to the full, with some few additions; so don't be shy. I on my part, concede nothing whatever to the insolence of youth, so be on your guard.

Ever yrs.

HENRY ADAMS.

Henry Higginson kept faith with the living, but the key to this long story of his usefulness as a citizen and public servant is the singular and noble fashion in which he sought to keep faith with the dead. He wrote to his wife in 1865: "You do not know how much I miss Charley and Stephen and Jim too. They constantly come before me." When Emerson's house was burned, and his friends, unknown to him, subscribed money to rebuild it, one contribution was marked, "In memory of Charles Russell Lowell and Stephen Perkins." "That," says Emerson's son, "was from H. L. H." It was the same H. L. H. who wrote in November, 1914, to James Ford Rhodes:

. . . We need more true democracy, true fellowship between man and man and more wish to serve our fellows, for on it depends religion, morality, the usefulness and happiness of life — God's blessing, else why are we here? It was our youthful doctrine and it wears well. Why feel a faith and not

try to live according to it? If my nearest and dearest play-mates had lived, they would have tried to help their fellows, and as they had gone before us, the greater the need for me to try — and the many tasks are still before us — and still very incomplete. As for you, dear friend, your especial task has been nobly fulfilled and what better task can a man take up? . . .

And once more, in May, 1918, to C. W. Barron: —

. . . I have never cared about money for its own sake, have had the good luck to get considerable, and have spent of it as well as I could. It is n't bread and butter we want half as much as it is pleasant, friendly relations with our fellow creatures; and if we did nothing for them, did n't hold out our hands to them, did n't foster the real democratic spirit, not of excess but of real charity and kindness, I think we have missed our ends. . . . Mind you, I have n't changed my views since I was twenty. These views were held by half a dozen of the ablest, most thoughtful, really brilliant men of my day, and with me they have only grown and deepened. These men are all dead, and I am their heir, as it were, to these ideas. I might make four times the money I now have, but I would not change on any account. . . .

All this tested fidelity to an ideal was in the minds of the three hundred men who gathered in the Copley-Plaza Hotel on November 18, 1914, to celebrate Major Higginson's eightieth birthday. There was also a dinner in his honor at the Tavern Club, and a reception at the Harvard Club of Boston, of which Major Higginson was likewise President. But the dinner at the Copley-Plaza, presided over by Henry Cabot Lodge, was the final seal of approbation of a great private citizen and public servant. The Symphony Orchestra played, and the Apollo Club sang. Letters were read from

Boston. November 19th
1918.

Dear Friend, Thank you -

As gift can ease the even welcome
as splendid as more comforting
even to dear.

Always a suggestion of it has
reached me - & no words will
express my deep desire of gratitude
to you for your kind & noble words
& to the host of friends, who have
sent their warm & warm
messages. Again, I think

you & them with all my heart.

As you know, the outbreak - work.
even from a dream of years is
hope, an ideal, a duty to me to
convert great work - & more

mind the price in labor &
unity - as failure -

Your own life has formed
your faith & the same with
of many words of ours - alone
& dead -

It is our country & our
country & we the our best -

All the more welcome,
welcoming our your words &
this precious book - & my
self & to me -

Thank you & all our
friends - Yours affectionately

Ch. W. Higgins

B. Charles W. Eliot

President Eliot, President Lowell, William Howard Taft, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Seth Low, and Charles Francis Adams. There were speeches by Bishop Lawrence, George W. Chadwick, William Roscoe Thayer, and General Stephen M. Weld. Mr. Higginson, the final speaker, had prepared a response, but as he rose and faced the long-continued applause, he found himself unable to speak more than a few sentences of gratitude. Yet he repeated what he called "the keynote of my faith": "*From my boyhood I have had a deep and passionate wish that we should live according to our highest ideals.*" The phrases were simple enough, and brief and broken, but in that company there was really no need for any words at all. What was eloquent was the gallant figure, the sabre-marked face, the passionate, wistful desire for service, and the record of eighty years.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORLD WAR

Du hast sie zerstört
Die schöne Welt.

— GOETHE, *Faust*.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

— GEORGE HERBERT, *Virtue*.

YET if Henry Higginson could have been wafted to the skies upon those clouds of incense burned in honor of his eightieth birthday, his life would have been incomplete. The fifth act of the drama, bringing the ultimate test of heroic hardihood, had indeed already begun.

On the very morning after the birthday celebration, Major Higginson had to look financial ruin in the face. In his pre-occupation with public affairs during those opening months of the World War, he was unaware of the state of his personal accounts. He had lived through many an "agony" of the market, in 1873, in 1893, and in 1907; but those anxieties were nothing when compared with this imminence of insolvency. It was there, stark and pitiless, like a reef looming suddenly through the fog. He "came about," as a laboring ship might, just in time and with nothing to spare. He was a proud man and kept silence. A friend quietly assumed the burden of carrying the Orchestra, insisting that this fact should not be known. Gradually Mr. Higginson's affairs straightened themselves, and the sky was clear again at his death. But those persons who thought that his failure to fulfill his long-cherished plan of endowing the Orchestra was due to pique over

the Muck incident, were very far out of the way. When Major Higginson's will was drawn in 1918, he could not possibly, after making suitable provision for his family, have carried out his earlier purpose of leaving a million to the Orchestra. He had already spent upon the Orchestra alone considerably more than that sum, without reckoning any of his other countless benefactions. His precept that "the rich man should give away all of his fortune during his lifetime" was more literally followed in his own case than the public ever realized.¹

The fifth act of this life-drama, then, opens with one of those reversals of fortune dear to the Tragic Muse. But the final years of Henry Higginson's career were not to be a tragedy. His pride was wounded, his mind was troubled, some of his purposes were foiled, and his friendship was betrayed, but through it all he remained unbeaten.

I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!

To realize the full extent of the difficulties facing him we must now go back from the birthday feast of November to the tragic days of early August. Brief passages from several letters make his personal attitude toward the conflict unmistakably clear. On August 3, 1914, he wrote to Senator Weeks: —

MY DEAR SENATOR: —

In these horrible times, may I say a word?

I am really astonished to find the unanimity and strong feeling about the German Emperor. Everybody speaks of him with horror and hatred for his cruelty in the matter of this war, which hurts everybody in the world. It looks like insanity, of which he has at times been accused, and certainly no one can call him sane if he wishes to fight the world.

¹ The inventory of his estate, filed in May, 1921, shows, however, that at the time of his death his holdings of personal property were more valuable than he supposed.

I am hoping that England will take a strong hand in this game, and help smash him; but, if England is in any need, I think we ought to take hold. If in any contingency the German Emperor should succeed, he would make for us next, and we don't want to fight him single-handed, though, as I feel to-day, I should be glad of the chance. We ought to do everything that we can for the good of the side opposed to the German Emperor, and I see no reason why we should not express publicly our detestation of his conduct. Perhaps this is not in conformity with diplomatic usages, but it looks like the death-grapple of an unprincipled man, who would rule the world for his own good and glory and that of his nation, and who will not consider anybody else. How far his pernicious influence goes, whether he has friends in this country, is hard to say. . . .

Two days later, he wrote to Mr. J. P. Morgan (the younger):—

. . . As an old man, and a friend of your father and of the house, I venture to trouble you with these lines. . . . It is cheering to see the English take the matter in hand so quietly and so resolutely, and personally I wish that we should go in too and help the English, for this man [the Kaiser] is an enemy to the world. If he is sane, he ought to be removed, and if he is insane, he ought to be locked up. Horrible as the destruction of property will be, and destruction of life, and almost worse, the maiming of many men and women, is the terrible temper which has been aroused. . . . However, there is more manhood in keeping your shirt on and making other people steady their nerves than there is in any amount of fighting. . . .

The feeling expressed in that last sentence is repeated in two short newspaper articles that Major Higginson wrote in the hope of steadying public feeling, which was already fearful of

a financial panic. In neither article does he betray his own sympathy for the Allies.

We have good crops and quiet homes, and we have the great barrier of the Atlantic Ocean between us and this terrible war. As men, we cannot forget the passions and sufferings of the fighting nations, but we can go on quietly. Nothing helps more in life than cheerfulness, and we Americans have the right and the duty to be cheerful. — Boston "Herald," August 7, 1914.

We are not responsible for the war — we could do nothing to prevent it; we have simply to see it through and keep our equilibrium and *keep sawing wood*. — Boston "Globe," August 11, 1914.

But in his private letters he confesses his bewilderment. "I can't get to anything decent," he writes to Mrs. George R. Agassiz on August 20, "can't get at the result to anyone here in America. It upsets all business and all calculations." He was quite aware that the traditional policy of the United States called for non-interference in European affairs.¹ He approved, like most of our citizens at the time, the President's proclamation of neutrality, as conforming to our traditions, and necessary to the "proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation."

Yet his letter of August 27, to Richard S. Guinness, of the London house of Higginson and Co., makes a clear distinction between our national policy and his personal mood: —

¹ In both conferences at The Hague, in 1899 and 1907, we reaffirmed this policy. As our delegates signed the first convention in regard to arbitration, they read into the minutes this statement: "Nothing contained in this convention shall be so construed as to require the United States of America to depart from its traditional policy of not intruding upon, interfering with, or entangling itself in the political questions or policy or internal administration of any foreign State; nor shall anything contained in the said convention be construed to imply a relinquishment by the United States of America of its traditional attitude toward purely American questions."

DEAR RICHARD: —

This morning I see in some paper that England would like to have the active sympathy of America. Naturally, our country must stand neutral, and one reason lies in the fact that perhaps we can act as a mediator, and if we take sides, we cannot do this well. I suppose that was Sir Edward Grey's attitude with regard to the impending war, before the crisis came. At any rate, it is the attitude which the Government has taken, and sane men think it is right. I am *not* sane, and wish that our country should soon declare its sympathy, if such sympathy is required to throw the Germans back. As regards the feeling of men and women whom I see, it is as strongly on your side as human thought and feeling can make it. Men are as hot as pepper, and women hotter still. . . . As I see it, if he [the Kaiser] succeeds and is not permanently beaten down in some way, the world is not a fit place to live in. The world has got on too far in the direction of a reasonable democracy to allow any autocrat to talk and act as the Emperor does. He has kindled an enormous enthusiasm in the German people for the German country, but it seems to me that in doing so he has lighted a fire which is burning up a great many of the German people; in short, it is the nation against its inhabitants. . . . I would not have any Englishman whom I know, or even do not know, think that we are not on your side, and I told you yesterday that, if it were left to me, I would put our navy in and send over half a million troops. Indeed, I feel like encouraging our people to go across the line and enlist in the Canadian regiments, and I have no doubt a great many will go. . . .

Two long letters to Colonel E. M. House, both dated September 1, 1914, show Mr. Higginson's feelings after the first month of warfare.

. . . England has been caught at a disadvantage; the same is true of France. Nobody thought that the German Emperor

would do what he has done, and I don't care a fig whether he brought the war on or whether he is to blame; he could have stopped it; he has made it; and he will be held guilty of the deed in the future. He has prepared this machine for years, and it is a wonderful machine. His officers have been drinking to "the day" for years, and we know perfectly well what he meant to do. He has brought a ruin on the world that is inconceivable. If he should succeed, we would come next. He will be sure to order us about. He may take Canada by treaty; he may go into South America; and we have no use for him nor his ideas this side of the water. I think our Navy should be kept in first-class order, and if I were President of the United States, I would see that it is used in convoying provision ships across the water, letting all the English ships go free to attend to their own affairs. Our Army should be carried to the full number, and I do think that the German system of everything in connection with the army should be studied, and our officers fully instructed in it. This may seem wild, and I should have said it was, a month ago; but I have lived in Europe, we have a house in Europe, we have close connections with it; I have known the Germans and the Austrians well, for I lived among them six or seven years. I have a letter from one of the great bankers there, written a week before the war, in which he said he did not think there would be any war between Germany and France and Russia — and yet it came. Mind you, he is one of the men who ought to have been informed by the German officials. Our turn will come next. We can do this: we can express our strong disapproval of various acts of the German army, and we can show our sympathy for the other side. If England were smashed, we should have lost our only real ally in this world. I think these things need consideration. . . . Nobody has a higher respect for the President, his motives, his actions, than I have. . . . When I think that the German Ambassador allows himself to talk as he does now, — declare that the victory is won, and that it is won in the cause of Democracy, — I wonder if I under-

stand the English language. This war is a war between Aristocracy, Autocracy, and Democracy, and you and I belong on one side, and cannot say it too loud or too often. . . .

In the second letter he urges Colonel House to use his influence with the President in favor of a move for peace.

. . . There is but one man who can move to advantage in this whole matter, and that is President Wilson. As the head of a great nation, which represents many more nations, he can fairly say to the European warring nations: "You showed your courage; you showed power; now just stop, and make peace. You are doing much to bankrupt yourselves; you are injuring the whole world greatly. Our workmen are suffering because of the disturbance; if ours are suffering, yours are suffering ten-fold. You are setting yourselves back a great many years and you are wasting the substance for which you worked so hard. Stop now; make terms, and try to keep the peace." Whether the exact moment for this has arrived, I certainly cannot say, but it would seem to me, after much consideration, that the President at least could express our belief and wishes in the matter. . . . Mr. Wilson's attitude and that of the nation has been excellent, and yet, as you know, with very few exceptions, everybody is on the side of the Allies. . . . Will you take up these matters with the President? There is really no time to be lost. I have seen a good many strange times, but you and I have never seen anything equal to the present time, and once more, there is no occasion for it. It can do nobody any good, neither Germany, England, France, Russia, Austria, nor any other nation, and it is daily and hourly doing to these nations a great harm, and through them hurting the whole world. . . .

On September 10 he wrote again to Colonel House: "He [the President] has struck the right note about his duty and

about his proclamation for a day of prayer for peace, and he has gained power thereby."

In the meantime Major Higginson had been greatly concerned about the Orchestra. Dr. Muck had spent the summer of 1914 in Europe, as usual. It will be remembered that he was now in the middle of his second term as conductor, under a five-year engagement, which began in the fall of 1912. Charles A. Ellis, the manager of the orchestra, was also in Europe, engaging new players. On September 3 Major Higginson wrote to Mr. Ellis in London, begging him to lay all the difficulties of the situation before Dr. Muck.

. . . You know my knowledge of, association with, and liking for the German people, men and women whom I have known, and especially with the South Germans. You know how I have got along with the Germans of the Orchestra during all these years, and how I have managed, with your great help, to get the best musicians — at the head, and away down the line. You know how much I have cared to keep the Orchestra going, and raised it to the present point, and how I have hoped to make it last long after I die. We have at its head the man who seems to me the best musician in the world as conductor of an orchestra, and a man of the highest ideals as a musician and as a gentleman. For all these reasons, I want to put the matter clearly before you and before him.

The feeling here with regard to this war is entirely against the German Emperor, and not against the German people. Rightly or wrongly, our people believe that the Emperor could have stopped the war, even if he did not make it. They believe that he has prepared for this war during his whole lifetime. Further than that, I don't think the Prussians are much liked here, and he represents the Prussians. . . . This feeling does not pass over to the German people. . . . Now it is only fair that Dr. Muck shall understand the sentiment about himself: there is one feeling universally, and that is

great admiration and gratitude for the beautiful concerts he has given, and which the people hope he will continue to give. . . . I wish Dr. Muck to know the attitude of our country-people; and let me repeat that nobody will take any attitude toward him but that of the kindest, most cordial appreciation of him and all his work. He has never been received more warmly than he will be on his first appearance here this year; but also you and he will agree that the passions of men have been inflamed to a degree not seen in our lifetime. . . . Since the war began, it has seemed to me a very difficult problem for Dr. Muck to make all his men play together. I have doubted whether he would care to play at all unless he got his best men. . . . It is n't the lessened *numbers* but it is the lessened *quality* which I dread, and which may disturb Dr. Muck very much. You remember that we cannot get any outside musicians, for they are all in the Union. Perhaps some of them might be willing to leave for the season, but I greatly doubt it; and Dr. Muck will not try to live with the Union, nor will I. I have so great a respect for Dr. Muck and his qualities and his ideals that I wish him to know all these things. . . .

Before the month was over, however, Dr. Muck arrived in Boston, and it was determined that the concerts should proceed. At the first rehearsal, October 12, 1914, Major Higginson made the following address to the members of the Orchestra:—

GENTLEMEN:—

It is pleasant to see you all, and I offer to you my kind greeting and best wishes, and I welcome the newcomers to our orchestra.

Nearly sixty years ago I dreamed of this orchestra for the sake of art, and especially for the happiness and welfare of our people. For thirty-four years I have worked over it and,

by the aid of many able and distinguished artists, the Orchestra has been formed, and has reached its present point of excellence. I care very much for the Orchestra.

We meet again under difficult circumstances; we are of many nationalities, including Americans, and we all are on American soil, which is neutral. Therefore, we must use every effort to avoid all unpleasant words or looks, for our task is to make harmony above all things — harmony even in the most modern music. I expect only harmony in your relations to one another.

I had feared that we might not be able to give the concerts this year, because the presence of Dr. Muck and of many members seemed unlikely. We have lost only a few men, and have filled their places well. The public has urgently asked me again and again for the concerts, and my only reply has been that it depended upon circumstances, and that, in case of a general war, the contracts allowed me to give up the concerts if I were not satisfied with the members to be had. It seemed clear that, if one year passed without the concerts, we should hardly ever have the Orchestra again; for to bring together the old men, who might have sought positions elsewhere, and to get the new men needed, would be a great task, to which neither Dr. Muck nor I was equal. It has taken many years to make the Orchestra, and you can understand how many years it would take to rebuild it.

I have thought of you all as needing the work; I have thought of the beautiful concerts already given, and have thought of the people who wanted them; and, considering all these points, I wish to go on with the concerts.

The conditions of this year were against us, and it was our part as men to overcome these conditions if we could. Dr. Muck has done his best; Mr. Ellis and Mr. Brennan have done their best; and I ask your agreement to do your best and, under no circumstances, however trying, to do or say anything which may cause friction. You have to sit together for

rehearsals, for concerts, in the tuning-room, in the railroad trains, in the hotels while on journeys. Mutual forbearance and respect toward each other is absolutely indispensable. Without it the Orchestra cannot live.

You all have at heart the reputation of our Orchestra, which has achieved a fine name and which is known in Europe as well as here. It rests with you to keep that name bright, and to give to our public such concerts as we have had before.

In making this appeal for harmony among the artists, Major Higginson knew that consistency required that his own public utterances on the subject of the war should not rouse antagonism among the players. If "mutual forbearance and respect" were commended to them, certainly the founder of the Orchestra would be expected to conform to his own precepts. Very significant is his note to President Eliot, of October 16: —

. . . Long ago I should have expressed strongly my own opinion that, if England needs support, it is our bounden duty and our interest to help her in any and every way to the full extent of our power; but I must keep on good terms with the Orchestra, which plays this afternoon for the first time this season. I have counseled to these men of a dozen different nationalities moderation and kind treatment of one another. I really am sorry that I am not free. . . .

A month later, at the birthday dinner, it was Dr. Muck who proposed Major Higginson's health, on behalf of the Orchestra, and except for a passing remark by a single speaker, there was no reference whatsoever to the war which was already threatening Western civilization.

Throughout 1915 Major Higginson appeared seldom in public. He was terribly worried: first by the crisis in his personal affairs; then by the problem of keeping peace in

the Orchestra and thus keeping faith with its patrons; and by the defeats of the Allies. He was a proud man, and his financial difficulties were kept secret. He wrote to an intimate friend in February: "I promised my partners and another friend that I would give nothing to anybody and lend nothing to anybody for a while. I have done too much of it." Referring to the renewal of the Symphony concerts in May, he wrote: "I must make contracts, must encourage those men in the belief of a good future, and yet cannot feel easy to bind myself, because of age and increased inefficiency. I'm in no distress, but have been too free, because the object was greater than the money, for the Orchestra, people, or the University."

His best friends understood why he did not speak more freely about the war. President Eliot wrote thus on January 5, 1915: —

MY DEAR HIGGINSON: —

I will go to the Union to-morrow evening.

You must, of course, keep on good terms with your German musicians. All the more, because music is really the only subject in which Germany can still claim superiority. Her philosophy and religion have failed to work; her education has not developed in the people power to reason or good judgment; her efficiency even in war is not greater than that of her adversaries; and her ruling class is too stupid to see that their game of domination in Europe is already lost.

Has it occurred to you that the Germans did not invent a single one of the new machines and processes which they are now using for purposes of destruction? Here is a list of some of these inventions, — all made in countries which enjoy some public liberty, — telegraph, telephone, wireless telegraphy, dreadnought, submarine, aeroplane, high explosives, typewriter, shoe machinery, sewing-machine, explosive engine and automobiles, anæsthesia, typhoid inoculation, and asepsis.

I hope that this war is going to prove that an individual or a nation will develop a higher efficiency as well as a finer character with liberty than without it.

Portions of three letters from Major Higginson to President Eliot, in May, show how his mind was working.

May 6. [The day before the sinking of the *Lusitania*.] The world seems to be agog, and now the East is going to begin. . . . But if all Europe and Asia wants to fight, or at any rate keep itself in a snarl, what other Powers should keep their heads except those of America — North and South?

May 8. The present trouble puzzles me, as it does everybody. We cannot fight; we have nothing to fight with. We can, however, cut off all intercourse with Germany and make it so unpleasant for the German Ambassador that he would like to go home. We can refuse to let anything in the way of merchandise go to Germany, and we can refuse to let any of her merchandise come here, so far as can be managed, although that would be an injury to us. In short, we could stop all intercourse, I suppose. We can also take and hold fast a dozen of her ships, which are now interned, until ample money indemnification is given for all that she has done. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that Germany could not have done a worse thing for herself, for she has enraged a great many people, not only on account of the cruelty but the meanness of this whole business. . . .

May 10. . . . There is no question about the *Lusitania* matter as I see it. It seems to be illegal, and there is no occasion for other adjectives about it. I have not seen the country so stirred since the Civil War. I very much wish that Mr. Wilson should have better advice, which he needs terribly. Root and Taft both would be good advisers at the present juncture. Taft is undecided at times, but he has a great deal of sense and knowledge and a great deal of courage, or I am

greatly mistaken. I should suppose that the President would demand of Germany instant apology and ample indemnification, with a promise that this shall not happen again; and that he would also say the same things to Bernstorff, saying that if he did not get these things, Bernstorff would get his passports. I should suppose also that the President would order that Philadelphia Consul and his clerks out of the country at once, without any delay or excuse, whether it is within the custom or is not within the custom, and that he would give warnings to various Germans who do not seem to be able to hold their tongues, that they hold their tongues or leave the country. Of course these are harsh measures, but we have either got to fight or stop the fire which is burning all over the country. Dernburg does not seem to have sufficient sense to hold his tongue, and if I knew him, I would tell him that he would better leave at once. In short, I would either have a full apology, or else I would tell all those men to get out. This would be no great injury to Germany, although it would be a warning to her. In writing to Germany, I would not mince matters one bit, but would express my horror and disgust at their cowardly and barbarous acts. In short, I would do everything except to make war. If they chose to declare war, we have all their ships here, and should take them, and we should do what we could to help England. Germany cannot hurt us, and I think she cannot accuse us of breaking the Monroe Doctrine, because we are simply resenting an attack on our own people. I think I would go as far as that. . . .

On September 24, 1915, he wrote to Senator Lodge: —

DEAR CABOT: —

A friend who has much red blood in his veins has been simmering for a year past and now comes to me to ask if a public meeting at Faneuil Hall, to express our strong sympathy with the Allies on moral grounds, would be worth while. . . . As

you are aware, I cannot take an active part in such a meeting, because I must get along somehow or other with the hundred men of the Orchestra. If I did it, it might break up the Orchestra.

Yet he had already begun to counsel preparation for war, as a measure of national defense. In a lecture on "Military History," delivered at the Harvard Summer School on July 7, he had advocated "a system of training like the Swiss system." He had prepared this address in April, and sent me the manuscript with this comment:—

What I especially had in mind was to point out our national slovenly ways, our guesses instead of study, our lack of knowledge, our conceit and especially that of our public men, and then to set forth some of the experiences of the Civil War, and to point out to them that our best Massachusetts militia regiment, which went at once, was under the command of a classmate of mine, who, when ordered at Bull Run to move forward, refused to do so. Thank God, he at last got into the fight and was wounded. It was only want of training.

He had also spoken at the Harvard Commencement on June 24, and this letter to Senator Lodge on the following day refers to this speech:—

. . . . The one thought that I wish to express constantly is that we have no quarrel with any nation as such, — that is, as regards the people, — but we will not have the Prussian rule in this country, and we will not submit to their regulations or views with regard to us. We cannot as yet interfere, and also we cannot be neutral — that is, you and I cannot. I do suppose that we would better keep out of the war if we can, and that it would be better for Europe as well as for us; but I also suppose that we will not bear certain things which Ger-

many thinks we may bear. As I ventured to say: "If any man strikes your mother, will you ask him to strike her again, or will you resent it as strongly as you can?" If our Revolution was worth while, if our fight in 1861 was worth while, if the whole English history for years and years has been worth while, or that of France or Italy, it is worth while to condemn absolutely and entirely the Prussian idea of government. It does not concern me very much who began this row, although the evidence is very clear. On my desk lies an unread letter from a dear old German friend, who is as true as you are, and who believes that Germany was oppressed and threatened and, therefore, she fought. I cannot quarrel with him any more than I can with you. Also, I cannot agree with him, and have told him so. But if this world is to be subjected to the Prussian rule, the Lord or the devil can receive me as soon as he likes. I cannot now — and indeed since I was five years old I never have been able to — conceive of life under any such rules, regulations and theories as Bismarck and William and the Prussian Oligarchy chose to impose; and when I said: "We will not bear it," I meant just that. . . .

It surprised no one, therefore, that he appeared in the Boston "Herald" of October 27, 1915, as a champion of "preparedness": "First comes the need of an army and navy able to keep the peace, no matter who knocks at the door. . . . Never fear that we, as a nation, shall want to fight after watching this terrible war. We need these armed forces in order to keep the peace, and our nation once well prepared for war, is it likely that any nation would meddle with us?" He was aware, of course, that this was precisely the same reasoning employed by Germany, France, Russia, and other European powers during the forty years preceding 1914. It had proved futile as a preventive of war. It was the old Hamiltonian argument for a self-sufficient empire, strong enough to resist any possible attack — an argument irrefutable only

so long as rival empires do not also arm upon the same principle. Yet Major Higginson, together with increasing masses of his countrymen, now saw no escape from this endless circle of cause and consequence.

He became Chairman of the Committee that arranged the Preparedness parade in Boston on May 27, 1916, and insisted, though he was in his eighty-second year, upon marching on foot the entire distance. In that same week he issued a plea for the Plattsburg training camps: "If our American citizens are not going to look after our country, who will do it? . . . Manhood suffrage requires manhood service, and this means service for every man and woman in the country. *Go to Plattsburg!*" On June 24, in the Boston "Herald," he pleaded for "500,000 volunteers for service anywhere, whether on land or on the water, and thus let Mexico see that we are in earnest. . . . The President has tried patience and delay, and they do not suit the case." Still he uttered no specific word against Germany, not even in his eloquent address in Appleton Chapel on November 1, 1916, in memory of the Harvard men who had fallen in the war.

The Orchestra, as a matter of fact, had enjoyed singularly tranquil and successful seasons in 1914-15, 1915-16, and well into the spring of 1917. In spite of the trying circumstances, Mr. Higginson's confidence in Dr. Muck, in the players, and in the public's continued cordiality, had seemed to be justified. His affairs in State Street were gradually adjusting themselves, and the sharpest anxiety had passed. There was not in truth very much for him to do in his office, and this period was one of extraordinary activity in letter-writing, particularly to public officials. There are fifty letters from President Wilson in his files, in reply to long communications from Major Higginson. The Major had approved of the repeal of the Panama Tolls Act, as the only honorable fulfillment of our treaty obligations. He likewise approved the lowering of the tariff. He liked the Federal Reserve Act in principle, but found fault

with many details. He was invariably critical of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and accepted with reluctance any measures looking toward governmental regulation and control of public-service corporations. The railroad situation continued to be a very sore point with him, long after he had ceased to own any railroad shares or bonds himself. During the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations alike, he always feared that some indefinable thing was about "to happen" at Washington. It may possibly be that State Street is as credulous as any other section of Boston Town. In general, Major Higginson's letters to the President, to Cabinet officers, and to Senators and Representatives from Massachusetts express his impatience with the tardy processes of legislation, and in fact his ineradicable distrust of legislation itself. "If we could only have quiet, no more moves, no Congress, the country would move on." He wrote these words to President Eliot in 1915, but he might have written them in any year since 1865.

Although he approved many of the acts of President Wilson's first administration, and wrote him in praise of his handling of the Lusitania incident, his enthusiasm gradually cooled, as it had done during the administrations of Roosevelt and Taft. He had never made any pretense of strong party fealty, and he had inherited his full share of the immemorial New England capacity for pointing out flaws in the conduct of the government of the United States. In the campaign of 1916 he had voted for Hughes.

And now, in the spring of 1917, when it was at last evident that the aggressions of Germany could be met only by war, Major Higginson was in a quandary. He had urged President Wilson to prompt action, and had supported his policy of arming our ships against submarine attacks. Our declaration of war was expected from hour to hour. As soon as it came, what would happen to the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its German conductor? Dr. Muck was just finishing the fifth

and final year of his second engagement. What was to be done?

On March 22, 1917, Major Higginson turned for counsel, as so often, to President Eliot.

DEAR OLD FRIEND: —

. . . We have come to a strange pass. Our contracts provided for war and other accidents, gave me the power to break up the work at any time if the Orchestra was injured seriously; and it was left for me to decide. We have a dozen nationalities in the Orchestra, and the men have behaved perfectly well toward each other since the war began. Dr. Muck is a hearty German, who wished to enlist and was refused for lack of strength. He has behaved well, and has been cordial to me since the war began, as before; and he has been most kindly received by audiences here and in other cities. . . . I trust him entirely as an artist and as a man, and he has worked as no other conductor has worked.

Query: Shall I go on with him and the Orchestra? He is the only man I know who can conduct for us. The Orchestra is fine, and has set the pace for the country, following out Theodore Thomas. The Orchestra has won a large and good public here and in many other cities, and the New York house is sold out permanently.

My connection with the Orchestra has shut my mouth many times, to my great regret, since August, 1914.

Turn it over, and advise me, for you are a sober, hearty patriot and a great figure in education and civilization."

The reply follows.

DEAR OLD FRIEND: —

I have taken a little time to think over your letter of March 22nd, for I find your problem a hard one.

. . . Have you, or the French members of the Orchestra,

had any reason to believe that the German members, or some of them, were what may fairly be called German agents? If no such suspicions have been entertained, I should think it would be safe for you to go on with the Orchestra until war breaks out, and the Government takes measures against Germans resident in this country, confining them or subjecting them to police surveillance. I think our Government will be slow to take any really troublesome action against German residents; but the moment killing, drowning, and wounding begin, our people will probably make the Germans with us uncomfortable and apprehensive. Then you may have to stop maintaining the Orchestra.

For the present, it seems to me to be possible for you to go on just as you have been going on. As to engagements for next year, is it possible to make them anything more than provisional, or dependent on the coming of peace?

It must have been very disagreeable to you to feel that your mouth has been shut; but I hardly think that such reticence as you have observed has really done any harm. I am sure that it has done you no harm. Everybody knows what your position really is in regard to national defense and war on Germany. Probably the members of the Orchestra all understand you and your opinions. They must know, for example, how active your firm has been in floating war loans of the Allies. In short, your comparative reticence has been unnatural and grievous to you and your family; but not harmful to the public. . . .

Within a week thereafter the nation was at war. The fate of the Orchestra was of course only a "leaf in the storm," but it involved and revealed the personal qualities of Major Higginson in such a striking fashion that some detail is necessary.¹ On July 5, 1917, he wrote to President Eliot: —

¹ Mr. Higginson's files of Orchestra correspondence for 1917 and 1918 alone would fill several volumes as large as the present one. Only the more significant and typical letters can be given here.

Sundry good and friendly people have told me to look out for Dr. Muck and his doings, and some of them are sure that he is making mischief; yet nobody knows anything about it; they simply guess and bid me to dismiss him. . . . If he is dangerous, so are many others of the Orchestra, and, if he goes, the Orchestra goes too, for I cannot replace him. I have never discussed war-matters with him, but I believe him to be a loyal South German. His father took out Swiss papers of citizenship for his children when Dr. Muck was a child, and those he has to-day. He was a favorite of the Emperor and came here at my solicitation, and because of much larger pay. There is the state of the case. . . . My intention is this — to go on as always and let things take their course. If any of these men behave wrongly, they will be punished by the law; and in case the war is finished, the Orchestra will be wanted. What else can I do? The men are of ten nationalities, and at my request have behaved perfectly well in every way since the war was declared. Of course, it is bread and butter to them. Whether Dr. Muck looks pleasant or is pleasant to those who run across him, is not my concern. So far as I know, he treats everybody well, but he should be by inheritance a loyal German. He was not accepted by the German war office because he was not strong enough, or perhaps too old, for he is 55 or 56 years of age. . . .

On July 9 he wrote again: —

. . . I could not keep the Orchestra going without Dr. Muck, and should not try. In the first place, conductors who like old and new music are very rare; next, Dr. Muck is the most industrious, painstaking and the ablest conductor whom we have ever had. . . . I do not want the modern men, that is, the men who believe in the modern music only and have little respect for the old music; and that is the tendency of the conductors.

He is perfectly honest in his transactions, in his work; he

never grumbles at anything, and makes the best of it; he is on most friendly terms with all his men, whom he rules firmly and kindly. I could not replace him either in this country or any other. Next, the Orchestra does not play well under any member of the Orchestra. We have tried that, and it does not work. If the quality given to the public were let down, I should lose my houses, and, if I lost my houses, I should have to stop.

I do not wish to be relieved of the burden during the war; that is to say, I do not wish to do so now, but what time will bring forth I cannot tell. To-day I am content to go on. If peace came to-morrow, I should not know where to look for a conductor in Europe.

My only question to you was whether I had not better let things take their course. Let me repeat that I can stop the Orchestra whenever I think it is, so to speak, dismantled in that degree that it is not satisfactory. If Dr. Muck went, it would be so dismantled. If Dr. Muck should be sent away, plenty of the men should be sent away on the same ground. Of course you see that the reason for getting the best possible conductor is to attain the highest possible standard in music, and also to hold the audiences, for I have to play against many other orchestras in this country, which have improved largely during the last thirty years. To-day not a seat can be had in New York, and very few good seats, in the afternoon, here. . . .

[*Penned postscript.*] Of course, it would be a relief financially and physically to stop the concerts, but a man may not undertake a real job and then drop it, to ease himself. You never have. But I will not sin against our country's welfare, or even disregard well-founded complaints of my loyalty. No one ever alleges anything overt, but some good people snarl.

President Eliot replied on July 11: —

"The reasons you give for keeping the Orchestra going and holding on to Dr. Muck are unanswerable, unless Dr.

Muck or some members or member of the Orchestra commit real offenses against this country. You and I will not believe that they have committed any offenses, or desire to do so, until we get real proofs of misconduct on their part. A safe conclusion then is to go on just as you have been.

"Your statement, however, that you could not keep the Orchestra going without Dr. Muck is somewhat disquieting. When peace comes, will he not surely desire to return immediately to Berlin, to take part in the rehabilitation of Germany and its Capital? Must that natural determination on his part bring the Orchestra to an end? I hope not."

Such was the situation in the midsummer of 1917. With every month of warfare, popular feeling against the Germans had naturally grown in bitterness. Talk of "German spies" filled the air, and the conduct of the German members of the Symphony Orchestra was closely watched. Of the 100 players, 51 were American citizens (17 being native-born), and 22 were Germans, 9 of whom had taken out their first naturalization papers. There were 8 Austrians, 2 Italians, 2 British, 6 Dutch, 2 Russians, 3 French, 2 Belgians, and 2 Bohemians. Dr. Muck's status was peculiar. He was born in Hesse, of Bavarian parents, in 1859, and acquired Swiss citizenship in 1867 by reason of his father's becoming a Swiss citizen in that year. The Imperial German Government did not come into existence until 1871. Hesse then became a part of it. Dr. Muck brought his Swiss papers to this country, and a Swiss passport. But in blood and sympathy he was unquestionably German, although the Federal authorities, after most careful investigation, reported that they had "found nothing to incriminate him as a German agent or as having performed any act which is prejudicial to the interests of our country." These authorities, it should be added, were long doubtful whether he could properly be classed as an "alien enemy" under the terms of the President's proclamations of April 6 and November 16, although he had certainly been a "denizen," if not technically a "citizen," of the German Empire.

When the Orchestra season opened in Boston, there was no evidence of trouble, except a few empty seats. But there had been some talk about the non-appearance of an American flag on Symphony Hall. Major Higginson, preoccupied with real war-work and with the future of the Orchestra, had simply forgotten to order a flag displayed.¹ He remedied the oversight as soon as it was called to his attention, but the incident was unfortunate. "Until lately my loyalty has never been questioned," he wrote sadly. Still more unlucky, as it proved, was his attitude toward the proposal that the Star-Spangled Banner should be played at the beginning of each Symphony concert. It had been invariably played at the "Pop" concerts during the summer, but Major Higginson, in common with most persons of musical training, felt that this air was out of place in a Symphony programme. As one correspondent expressed it: —

"I am sorry to see from the papers how much you have been harried about the Orchestra by people who have more zeal than judgment, and who, however loyal, can certainly not have proved their patriotism more than you have yourself. Whatever may be said for the playing of patriotic airs in public gatherings, the Star-Spangled Banner is not well-fitted for a full-stringed symphony orchestra, good as it is for a military band. The objection to playing it is not in any sense on patriotic grounds, but because of its inappropriateness, and I hope you will not give way. If these same people were to demand that, as a proof of loyalty, you should wear a star-spangled blue waistcoat and red-and-white striped trousers, you would refuse, not from lack of patriotism, but from a sense of what is appropriate. Those of us who, being too old to bear arms, are working to our full capacity for the country in these times, when acts count more than words, need not fear any charge of lack of enthusiasm for our country's cause."

¹ Judge Hoar of Concord, when once requested to buy a flag and "raise" it on the Fourth of July, had remarked dryly: "Mine is a patriotism that *never flags*."

But that last sentence was too optimistic. When the war-spirit is blazing, a dispassionate judgment about the "appropriateness" of such a symbol as a flag or a national anthem becomes impossible. If Henry Higginson had possessed the political instinct of the average ward politician, he could have saved the situation; he had only to dismiss Dr. Muck, to wave the American flag, order the national anthem played, and make one of his inimitable little speeches to a pleased audience. But he had no political cunning whatever. He was a weary and perplexed old man of eighty-three, who was simply trying, as always, to discover his duty and to do it.

The storm broke first in Providence. The "Reminiscences" dictated in 1918 continue the story: —

In the autumn of 1917 some mutterings were heard about the Germans and the Orchestra, and when the first concert in Providence was to be given, there came a demand that the Star-Spangled Banner be played. The demand came to Mr. Ellis, the manager, when he was sitting in my office between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. The demand came from four women in Providence, who were subscribers and who were unknown to us. As the Orchestra was to go to Providence at five o'clock and, therefore, there was no time for rehearsal, as we had not the music, and as Dr. Muck had never heard anything about it, it seemed impossible. Therefore, by telegraph, I ordered stopped all sale of extra seats for the Providence concert that night. Fearing some trouble, I went to Providence myself and attended the concert, which was well given and received. One or two newspaper men wished to come in and were not allowed to do so. We then came home, and the next day Dr. Muck heard of this request. He had not heard anything about it before. Then trouble began. X, of the Providence "Journal," who had been advertising himself and making various revelations, was abusive, as well as one or two of the other papers, and the request for the Star-

Spangled Banner was heard in Boston. In the spring of 1917 one man in Boston had written to me on the subject, but I had put it aside.

We had played in Providence Tuesday evening, October 30th. I considered carefully the question of playing the National Anthem at our concerts; one good friend advised me to have it played. My objection had been that it did not belong in the programme and that nobody of value to me had asked for it. Three wise friends advised me not to have it played. On Friday, November 2, I asked Dr. Muck to come to my office, which he did. I then said to him: "Will you play the Star-Spangled Banner at the beginning of our concert to-day and always?" His reply was: "What will they say to me at home?" I said: "I do not know, but let me say this: when I am in a Catholic country and the Host is carried by, or a procession of churchmen comes along, I take off my hat out of consideration — not to the Host, but respect for the customs of the nation. It seems to me only friendly and reasonable." He said: "Very well, I will play the Star-Spangled Banner." At the same time Dr. Muck said that he would like to resign his position; to which I replied that that would be very inconvenient; that I did not know what we could do, as I knew of nobody to take his place. He said: "Suppose I should be interned?" to which I replied: "That is most unlikely"; and left it there.

Before the concert began on Friday afternoon, I went on the stage, stated that Dr. Muck had resigned, and that the matter was in my hands; that I had asked him to play the Star-Spangled Banner at the beginning of all our concerts, and that he would do so — and he always did.

On the next journey we had no trouble in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, or Washington; but Baltimore threatened a riot if the Orchestra was allowed to play there as it always had. Therefore, the order was given to cut out Baltimore entirely, and the Orchestra has never played there

since. The threat came from an ex-Governor of Maryland, and many false statements were made with regard to the Orchestra and Dr. Muck. We played in Philadelphia the next day with success, and then in New York and Brooklyn, but there was more or less uneasiness from a few people. This trouble went on all winter more or less. Very many letters were written to me, begging that the concerts should go on as usual, with the same conductor and the same musicians. A few letters objected, a few were anonymous, and some were very abusive and, indeed, indecent.

A few passages from the enormous correspondence of this autumn should be given here, for they reveal a side of Henry Higginson that the public ignored. The press had spread the Orchestra troubles over the country, with the usual distortions and falsifications. Some Boston newspapers took pains to tell the exact truth, but the truth never overtakes the lie. The impression received by the general public in other cities was that Major Higginson was a well-meaning but arbitrary old gentleman, who had now received, particularly from Providence and Baltimore, a much-needed lesson in "patriotism." But in reality what most impresses the reader of his correspondence is the gentle patience, the infinite personal courtesy, with which he undertook to reply to every signed communication, no matter how abusive. There was perhaps one exception. The Washingtonian who wrote, "The statement attributed to you that the Star-Spangled Banner has no place in a programme of artistic symphony music is an indication of an unmitigated snobbery — as ungentlemanly and unrefined as it is unpatriotic and un-American," apparently had that letter returned to him; for he writes again: "I notice that you took care to retain the blank half-sheet. Had I only been aware how small a man you really are — as evidenced by that petty action on your part — I should probably not have been so exercised over your gratuitous insult to the national air. . . .

As you seem to be hard up for stationery, I am enclosing a whole blank sheet, which may come in handy some time."

From Roanoke, Virginia, came an indignant demand: "If you are a Major of State Militia or of the U.S. Army . . . you should be stripped of your title and be dishonorably discharged" for insulting the National Anthem. Major Higginson, in replying, courteously hinted where he had earned his title: "I served in the Northern Army during the Civil War, and met the Confederate troops, more especially those of Virginia. We had high respect for them and hope they had the same feeling toward us." The Virginian promptly apologized.

An army officer, disgusted with the newspaper attacks upon Major Higginson, wrote to him: "War is indeed made more terrible by the persons who stay at home!"

"If you mind the nasty letters," wrote President Eliot, "I suggest that whoever opens your mail throw away all the unsigned ones and all the signed ones from strangers." But Mr. Higginson could not bring himself to do this, although he confessed that "when mud is thrown, a little usually sticks, and, at any rate, leaves a stain."

More than ever in these autumn days, he sought counsel from his tried friends. He had yielded on the Star-Spangled Banner, but he was not ready to break up the Orchestra. "My own opinion is," he wrote Erving Winslow, "that if I backed out from this work now I should be a sneak." "The public is not always reasonable," he wrote President Lowell, on November 5, ". . . and now I am wondering how long people will bear the Star-Spangled Banner played at every concert. They will get tired of it, and presently I shall have remonstrances the other way. That is one of the troubles of war, and we must bear it as well as we can."

"It seems to me," wrote President Lowell on November 20, "that the continuance of the Symphony Concerts, and the retention of Dr. Muck as Director is a very important matter for our community. Music is one of the things in which America

is singularly backward, and the amount that the Symphony Orchestra has contributed to American education cannot be overestimated. I do not see how German music, or German musicians, can corrupt America, or Germanize us. Because we quarrel with a nation because their conduct is outrageous and requires to be suppressed by force, is no reason why we should deprive ourselves of their art."

President Eliot and a score of other leading citizens of Boston, whom Mr. Higginson consulted at this time, were of the same opinion. They had been informed by Mr. Higginson on November 20 that "The Department of Justice has conducted a special investigation of the newspaper charges against Dr. Muck, and has assured me that no objectionable conduct whatsoever on his part has been discovered. This is in keeping with the result of a former investigation in the early fall." And nevertheless the clamor for Dr. Muck's dismissal steadily increased.

Two facts must be kept clearly in mind at this point. One is that nothing had as yet transpired to shake Mr. Higginson's confidence in Dr. Muck as a man of honor. He stood by him with chivalric and obstinate loyalty, believing him to be innocent of any of the charges whispered or shouted against him. Major Higginson's action at this time must be judged in the light of this belief, and not in the light of his later knowledge that Dr. Muck was a scoundrel.

The other fact — to which Major Higginson gave possibly too tardy a recognition — was a phase of war-feeling which made it impossible for many good men and women to look — if they could help it — at a German face, or to read a German book, or to listen to a German musical composition. It was illogical and perhaps irrational; yet most of us, in our disgust and horror at Germany's conduct in the war, could not help transferring our dislike to any object that reminded us vividly of Germany. Now Dr. Muck, however innocent he might be, was certainly one of those objects. Many persons pointed out

the fact to Mr. Higginson, and if he was at fault at all in this whole trying experience, it was in his slowness in putting himself in the place of the subscribers to concerts.

Yet he tried to do so. One of his kinswomen, for instance, wrote him affectionately that it was really impossible for her to attend the concerts any longer, for the reason just stated. His reply on November 14 is touching in its simplicity and frankness: —

Of course I understand your ground about Dr. Muck and find it perfectly natural, and the more horrid things the Germans do, the more natural it seems. I have thought and still think that I know about that man very well, for I have seen considerable of him for the last eight years, and think he is a typical artist who holds strong opinions about art and not very much about other things. Of course he is a German, and of course he sympathizes with that side, but he has done us great services which it is fair to recognize. When they talk about his having done this or that which is disloyal to us, when they say that he is pushing schemes here, they are saying what they do not know. . . . He is very shrewd and he would not give himself away on any account, no matter what he thinks or what he wants. But I do feel very badly that the public should throw so many stones at him and at the Orchestra. . . . I am sorry to say that it has destroyed for me all pleasure in the Orchestra. We will go on with it if possible. And there comes another point. I don't know whether it is possible. If the newspapers and cavillers will stop their noise now, we can go on, and if not, I shall have to stop, and it will cost a very large sum of money. I can break all the contracts of all the men, but the poor devils have got to have something to live on, and if I won't employ them, who will? In short, it is an impossible position for them. People tell me to let them go home, but they can't go home. A Frenchman could return; the Belgians cannot, nor the Roumanians, or Poles,

or Bohemians, or Russians, or anybody else except possibly some Englishmen, and I don't think we have any. Meantime, the papers say that I threaten to disband the Orchestra. The people who disband it are the newspapers and the men and women who attack it. And speaking of this last class, the chief people who attack it are those who do not go to the concerts, who are n't in the cities where the Orchestra has played, and the newspapers.

Years ago I refused to have anything to do with the musical union, because the union stipulates how many rehearsals shall be given and what the men shall do and what their pay shall be, etc., and I could not get the best artists in that way, and I sought the best artists. The union warned me that they would hit us when they could, and I believe they are at the bottom of this whole trouble. Then there are the men who are envious of our success, like some of the leaders in New York and Philadelphia. They began last summer by saying Dr. Muck was going away. It is not well to call names, but I could tell you of two or three who have done what they could. It is a cabal which wants to throw us out, and it will succeed if the papers and a certain number of noisy people keep up the row. . . . I tell you, dear child, I never have had such a painful experience in this life. Certainly I tried my best to help our people and give them enjoyment and refreshment. I could go on in the same way if allowed, but at present I cannot conceive that we can play another year. One silly woman, whom you know, wrote me the other day that she did n't like the attitude of Dr. Muck. She knew no more about him than the man in the moon. I call it a very mean attitude to take, and it is a very different thing from your own attitude, which I respect and understand entirely.

To get back to the two contracts which I made. One was with the public in various cities, to give them a certain kind of concert, and I will try to do it. The other is my contract with a lot of musicians, to give them certain employment, and I

shall try to do it. They tell me to change the conductor. There is no other conductor to take, known to me. As I said before, they say to send these men home, but they cannot go. Supposing that a great German artist has painted a lot of beautiful pictures which your father has bought, as he did the great Millets, and that he offered them to the Museum and the Museum said, "We don't want your darned old pictures. They were painted by a German. Never mind if they are beautiful. We won't have them in the house."

However, I am tired out and can think of nothing else, which is very childish. But if I cannot write to you, dear child, I don't know to whom I can write. . . .

He turned again to President Eliot for counsel on December 5: —

. . . The feeling among good people who care much about the Orchestra and are most friendly to me, on this subject, puzzles me. This morning I have been hearing the words of a wise, enthusiastic lover of music and of our Orchestra. She takes her tickets, but she does not go because she cannot bear to hear these Germans play. She tells me that many, many people feel the same way; and when I asked her why there were not many vacant seats, she said they give their seats away. All that, no doubt, is true, but still a very large majority is on the other side. It really is a question for you and me as to what is right in the interests of civilization and particularly in the cause of our country, and I am puzzled.

To this letter President Eliot replied, December 6: —

"Several excellent women have said to me that they cannot stand seeing that hateful Dr. Muck leading admirably an orchestra largely composed of Germans and demonstrating the superiority of Germany in music during the last hundred years. Their judgment is overpowered by their passionate

hatred of the actual Germany and its crimes on land and sea. They cannot bear to admit that Germany has any merits whatever, or ever had. Some of our learned men want to return to Germany all the honors and titles they have received from her, and to withdraw from membership in German learned societies. These, I think, must be persons whose imaginations deal chiefly with the present, soon become cloudy as to the past, and are unable to reach forward into the future.

"We must admit, however, that the case of the Orchestra presents some difficulties besides technical ones. Music stirs the emotions very much at the moment of hearing it; and the emotions stirred by the Orchestra in a woman who has a husband or a son in the Army or Navy are adverse to the performance, and particularly to the conductor. You and I are not sorry to remember in these days that the American people as a mass has been, and is, a fighting people, prone to resort to force, and easily provoked to violence and combat. This is true of the women as well as of the men; and when the people have gone to war they are not going to be considerate of alien enemies within the gates.

"I am not at all puzzled about the right course of action in regard to the Orchestra. I think it should be maintained through the War as a valuable institution of art education. I wish it had more of an institutional aspect. It, of course, appears now as the creation of an individual, which may cease whenever that individual dies or is disabled. . . .

"If desired, the Orchestra might play some other national airs in addition to, or substitution for, the Star-Spangled Banner. America, for example, is a fine old German tune, known in England as God Save the King; and the Marseillaise is the best of all the national hymns. Mrs. Howe's hymn is set to a first-rate marching tune which would be welcome in many northern cities. . . .

"Finally, I hope you are eating and sleeping well, and taking

plenty of fresh air every day. It would be somewhat mortifying if your activities should be even temporarily impaired in consequence of these attacks on the Orchestra and its conductor. . . ."

Mr. Higginson wrote to him again on December 7:—

. . . Not being a reasonable man, and having very strong feelings about this war and its causes, I sympathize with the people who cannot bear to hear German music or Dr. Muck or the men in the Orchestra. . . . On Wednesday he made an application for a permit, according to the wishes of the Marshal here, and thereby agreed to do nothing and say nothing [adverse] to our country. . . . The exact status of Dr. Muck will be settled presently by the Attorney-General's office. . . . The whole question of citizenship is very mixed and must be left to the experts.

If we feel very strongly about the Germans, I understand that German music would hurt people's feelings; still more, that German musicians rendering that music would hurt people's feelings. No doubt the same is true of *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, for it was composed by Luther, as I understand it. The same is true of *God Save the King — America*. Both of these are matters of association. Probably many of the hymns which we sing in church are of German origin, and certainly the greatest masterpieces of music have been written by Germans or men with German blood. Of course there is a claim that Beethoven was not a German but a Dutchman, which is pretty much the same thing; in short, it is not a matter of reason, but a matter of feeling, and one good that we get from women is that they are often governed by their feelings and not infrequently are nearer right than we are.

The other side is this. Women make up much the larger part of the audiences which hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and probably other orchestras. If the women are hostile or refuse to go, the audiences would be small, and

without good audiences our Orchestra cannot play. We must have first-rate houses and, to that end, we must have a very high-grade orchestra and we must have a very high-grade conductor. . . . When people talk about it being easy to find them, I don't know where, and I have tried to keep myself informed for many years. . . . I also have thought of the Orchestra playing other national airs, but how to bring it in is not easy. Anybody may say of America that it is German, and they probably would. I do not believe it would be wise to play the Marseillaise, and I have already considered playing Mrs. Howe's hymn, which has much more swing and much more charm than the Star-Spangled Banner or almost anything else. In a multitude of cares, we have not done it as yet.

You hope that I am eating and sleeping well. I am eating as little as possible, and usually sleep well, which is really my only gift. I have slept everywhere, even in church, in a pigsty, etc., but it is my gift; and I get a fair amount of fresh air, and I fret a great deal, which is the most unwise and injurious habit man can have. It is almost impossible to help it. I am foolish enough to mind the nasty letters, signed and unsigned. In short, I have never learned any wisdom since I was born.

As to making our Orchestra an institutional affair, how to do it I do not know. I have always believed that it had much of its success from the fact that it was so simple, that the conductor managed all the art part, that our men managed the business part, and that I passed on the important points, and nothing more. . . .

As to the women who have husbands and brothers and sons and grandsons at the front, and who are nervous about them or else deeply grieved, there is only one word to be said. We must pity them, sympathize with them to the utmost. When I was brought home hurt in '63, and heard and saw the awful suffering of the women, I thought the wounds were a very

small matter; and to-day I do not pity the young fellows who are going out one bit; on the contrary, envy them; but I do pity the women who send them, and if they are nervous or cannot bear to hear a German conduct the Orchestra and listen to German musicians in the Orchestra, I have nothing to say. Only they cannot have their cake and eat it too, and if they frown on the Orchestra and even refuse to go, though they buy the tickets, the game is up. . . .

But in truth the game was more nearly "up" than even Mr. Higginson realized. The Orchestra had made the usual contracts for out-of-town concerts in January, February, and March, 1918. On account of the continued outcry against Dr. Muck, the concerts in Mid-Western cities were abandoned, although the Department of Justice had ruled in December that the Orchestra, with Dr. Muck and the other "alien enemies" among the players, could go anywhere in the United States except to the District of Columbia. This exclusion from Washington was based upon a proclamation by the President regarding "alien enemies." The Attorney-General and his assistants treated Mr. Higginson with the greatest personal consideration, and he accepted the rulings of the Department of Justice with entire loyalty. Although Dr. Muck had, on legal advice, refused to register in January as an "alien enemy," holding that his Swiss passport protected him from that status, the Department of Justice decided that as a former "denizen" of Germany, no exception could be made in his case. The moment the out-of-town concerts began, Mr. Higginson had to face a new storm of protesting letters. His *Reminiscences* describe briefly the troubles in New York:—

By and by—say in January—one or two New York women, backed up by one or two men,—people in good position,—wrote me demanding that Dr. Muck should be dismissed and this or that, because he was a German and because

they said he was doing very wrong. The correspondence went on more or less for a month or two, and the affair became very disagreeable and very annoying to me. In early February, owing to certain facts, I made up my mind that Dr. Muck should go at the end of the season (he had stayed over one year at my request, his contract being out), as it seemed wiser that he should leave us. I had promised a near friend that it should be done.

In March came the last concerts in New York, and as there had been a great deal of abuse from that city, both from decent and indecent people, I went with Mrs. Higginson to the last concerts there — one concert in the evening Thursday, March 14, and another in the afternoon, Saturday, March 16. On both occasions Dr. Muck was very well received by the audience, and even I was applauded as I left the hall to speak to Dr. Muck in the intervals, both at the evening and the afternoon concerts. In short, his reception was perfectly good.

These New York people had charged that we were distributing tickets in New York and Brooklyn and giving them to soldiers and sailors, in order to fill the house with loyal people. This was a lie made out of whole cloth. There were no tickets given away and no seats to spare at the New York concerts or at the Brooklyn concert. On the contrary, in order not to have trouble, we stopped the sale of "standee" tickets in New York. There were a few places vacant owing to the cavil against the Orchestra, but the season there finished quietly.

Yet the strain told. On February 25, Mr. Higginson confided to an intimate friend, Judge Frederick P. Cabot of Boston, his intention to retire from all connection with the Orchestra at the end of the season, on May 4. The proposal that a committee should henceforth undertake the work thus far carried on by Major Higginson, had already been made by many friends. The letter follows: —

DEAR FRED:—

. . . My present plan is to keep absolute silence until the end of the last concert, and then to state my case from the stage—*viz.*: that the conductor has been so harassed that he can only go; and that I quit also. This plan involves a considerable statement, which can be made then and there. Any earlier statement would injure the concerts and make much trouble all around. Tell me if you approve of this plan.

Now as to the future, if you have time to consider it and take action: We have reached a time, through circumstances, when I can drop this task without comment as to my motives, because the Orchestra and conductor have been attacked, and I also, as a man who employs Germans and, therefore, whose loyalty can well be doubted. As you know, various decent people here and in other cities have joined in this attack; so the moment seems opportune.

Now, as to a committee to manage the Orchestra as in Chicago and Philadelphia: I do not know how it would work. Several times I have tried it here, and the good people always defer to me and ask what I want. Do you suppose a committee can be found that will sign yearly contracts, or longer, say for \$400,000 a year, and who will hire the hall at a loss of \$15,000 a year, and supply the music, and get and keep the confidence of the men, as well as find a great conductor, and take him for a period of years? The hardest of all is that they must keep their hands and tongues off the conduct of the art side, or they will make trouble.

One source of anxiety to me in all these years has been the chance of a large loss. It came once in a bad year of business to \$52,000, and it sent the blood to my head. This year it will be more than that. I have often wondered that the luck has been with me so greatly, wondered that it did not hurt my credit; but nobody knew the facts. Several times my father urged me to stop, but I was obstinate. The men, as you know, have come to trust in me, and have a feeling of loyalty to the

Orchestra and to me, as well as to the public. But on this last point they have been rudely shaken this year. Kind opinion has been universal until this year. . . .

You will note one point: I could not have stopped prudently at the beginning of the war, because it might have looked as if I had been badly hit by the war, and you know what a ticklish thing credit is. Now an excellent reason has arisen. I may say to you as an intimate friend that the load has become almost intolerable. It is with me night and day, and it worries me and tires my head — and that is not right to my wife or my partners. Very much of the joy of the concerts and the joy of the music is gone for me; but, again, that is of no consequence, for I have had my day, and had great comfort from the Orchestra. . . .

Another intimate friend had written on February 16: —

"As you asked my opinion, dismal as I feel the outlook to be without the Orchestra, there seems to me nothing to be done but to stop it before the insidious poison has spoiled the vision you have given us, — or obscured it, for it is immortal, — nothing can change that, — and it must arise again for our salvation 'when this tyranny is over-past.' I am naturally obstinate and a fighter, but the powers of darkness do not fight fair."

The dénouement came swiftly. On March 6 Major Higginson informed Dr. Muck that his engagement would be terminated on May 4. Dr. and Mrs. Muck asked his help in securing a permit to leave the country, and as a final act of chivalrous courtesy¹ Mr. Higginson applied to the Washington authorities. "They do not intend to come back. Also, they wish to keep their going a secret until the time comes. . . . I am satisfied with the fact that he has done nothing disloyal or injurious in any way to our country. . . . He has

¹ "He has been inside our house just once since the spring of 1914." H. L. H. to Henry Cabot Lodge, April 2, 1918.

behaved himself with absolute propriety in every respect. I have known him well and can testify to his honesty and honor." Never were more sincere words written.

A fortnight later, on March 25, Dr. Muck was arrested, and interned as an alien enemy. No specific charge against him was made public, in the nature of the case. But Major Higginson also learned, for the first time, that there was indisputable proof of Dr. Muck's base personal character. This narrative will not touch further upon that matter. The Reminiscences tell merely the story of the arrest of the "alien enemy": —

. . . About the first of March Dr. and Mrs. Muck had come to my office, and Dr. Muck said he thought he would better leave his position, to which I replied: "Not until the end of the season, but at that time I think you would better go"; to which they assented. At that time he was preparing the second great choral concert of the year. He had been working as he had never worked before during the whole winter, had given one very fine choral concert two or three times, and was preparing the last Bach's Passion Music. At the last rehearsal of this music I was absent with some friends in Cambridge, and during the rehearsal some United States officers came to the hall and proposed to take Dr. Muck off the stage and lock him up; but, at Mr. Ellis's request, they waited until he came from the rehearsal, then arrested him and locked him up. He was not properly treated that night, not being allowed to change his clothes, — which were wet from perspiration, — and was put in a police-station cell. The next day he was taken to Cambridge, and, after a few days there, was sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and interned. The complaint against him had been that he was an enemy alien, so the United States attorney in Boston told my counsel, Mr. Clapp. . . .

After Dr. Muck was interned, Mr. Schmidt — a full-

blooded German — conducted the concerts and carried the season through fairly well, although it was not the same thing as under Dr. Muck; but the Orchestra kept its swing and satisfied the audiences. . . .

At the end of the season, at the last concert of Saturday evening, May 4, 1918, I went on to the stage, stated the original purposes of the Orchestra, and said that I was done with the work, added a few words to the men of the Orchestra, and came away; and that was the finish of my connection with that enterprise. Various friends had already been moving and had resolved to carry on the Orchestra, and I stated that fact at the last concert. . . .

Readers of Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast" will never forget how the good brig *Alert*, after beating her way in heavy weather around Cape Horn, came out upon the wide Pacific, caught the southeast trade-winds, and ran before them week after week toward California, without so much as altering a sail or bracing a yard. The tension was over, and in golden weather and with favoring winds the *Alert* made for port. So it was with Henry Higginson, now that the orchestra troubles were past. It is true that he had been very hard hit. He had been misrepresented, insulted, and betrayed, but he had not been conquered. He was made of indomitable stuff, and he had "carried through." Physical suffering had accompanied the worst period of his anxiety, for on that 6th of March, when he had told Dr. Muck that the engagement would cease on May 4, came a sharp attack of an old malady, which troubled him for many months.

"I regret to say," he wrote Senator Lodge on April 2, "that these attacks and rows have stirred up trouble inside of my own old body, so that for four weeks I have been incapacitated for any work, and cannot travel."¹ He aged visibly

¹ He wrote to Charles A. Coffin in May: "I've turned over the charge of our Orchestra simply because the lying dirty attacks on it and me have used me up and given me eight weeks of real physical pain."

that spring. Nevertheless, his correspondence shows no decline in mental vigor, and never had he more letters to answer. No one who has not seen his letter-files can have any conception of the number of men who presented themselves as candidates for the conductorship of the Orchestra. But he referred these aspiring artists to the committee which was organized at his house on April 18, and which undertook the future charge of the Orchestra. He was able to appear at the final Friday concert on May 3, and received an ovation from the public. On the evening of Saturday, May 4, the Orchestra played in his honor the Eroica Symphony, and never more magnificently. Major Higginson read the following brief address, in terminating his years of labor. It is perfect in tone and temper: —

MY FRIENDS: —

The Boston Symphony Orchestra was set up from the conviction of my youth that our country should have great and permanent orchestras. In Europe I had seen the pleasure and comfort of such orchestras, and it seemed my duty and was my aim to give our country the best music possible.

To achieve this object, it was necessary to give to the conductor the sole artistic responsibility as an essential to success, and then to require of him and of his men a high and ever higher standard. To win that standard nothing has been spared and the aim never forgotten; and in this season our Orchestra has reached our high-water mark.

The concerts were offered to the whole public, but my chief wish and hope was to meet the needs, and satisfy the longings for the beautiful art of the many people leading quiet or busy lives and having little enjoyment; and furthermore, to help in the education of the students of music.

To me the concerts have been a great joy, not only because of the lovely music, but chiefly because of the refreshment and enjoyment of the multitude of people unknown to me

who, leading gray lives, have needed this sunshine; and this year it is they who have written to me a mass of warm letters full of gratitude for the past and of urgent requests for the future. To these unknown friends and to all of our audiences far and wide I offer my heartiest thanks.

Thus the faith and the vision of my youth have been justified.

I had hoped to have carried on the concerts during my lifetime; but this war has brought us many troubles, and, among them, the problems of the Orchestra during this season, which have exhausted my strength and nerves. Therefore, my part in our Orchestra ceases to-night, except for the popular concerts of this year.

The conductors, the members of our Orchestra, and the office management have done their work excellently from first to last, and have deserved the warmest thanks and praise.

(To the Musicians)

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:—

For many years we—you and I—have been good comrades—an honor and a great pleasure for me.

In these years we have worked hand and glove together, and have kept true to our rule, laid down at the outstart, of intelligent study under one conductor at a time; and we have reaped the reward of success sure to follow.

We have played in many cities of the United States, and have won great applause and, better still, have deserved it.

Each year has marked an advance in the quality of our music, and this year has seen our high point.

I like to think myself a member of our Orchestra, and have done my best to help you; and, on your side, you have served with an intelligence and devotion not to be forgotten by the audiences or by me. I congratulate you, and thank you for our success fairly won.

My time for work is past; and now a number of excellent

men and women have taken my place. Of you I ask for them the same intelligence and devotion as in years gone by.

My best wishes go out to you.

(To the Audience)

Our Orchestra has always been heartily supported by you and by the public throughout our country, else it could not have lived. It must live in all its strength and beauty, and now will be carried on by some friends who have taken it up; and for them I ask the same support which you have given me through all these years.

As the spring turned to summer, Major Higginson's physicians insisted upon his taking a rest. They succeeded in keeping him in bed for a time, but even there he had a stenographer at his elbow. There were so many persons, as always, "to be smoothed, admonished, touched up"! He followed every important move of the committee who had taken over the care of the Orchestra; kept in touch with the various phases of war-work which had their headquarters at his office; had his eye upon training camps, particularly those where Harvard students were assembled; and besides all this, assumed the responsibility of organizing community singing throughout Massachusetts. Never were his letters to his friends more genial. "The doctor says I shall be perfectly well by the first of October," he writes; "much better than I have been for a long time. Now that the load of the Orchestra is off my shoulders, I know what a load and care it has been, but I'm very glad I have had it." Hundreds of letters expressing gratitude and regard reached his bedside. William H. Taft had written during the Orchestra troubles, earlier in the year: "If I were to name a man of the highest type of loyalty and patriotism, I would name him to whom this letter is addressed." Theodore Roosevelt wrote in August: "I hope

you will soon be better. You have always been an inspiration, not only to those who knew you, but to all your countrymen, my dear sir." Mr. Higginson was particularly delighted with a letter from Elihu Root, to whom he had written offering to resign as trustee of the Carnegie Institute, on the ground that he could no longer attend many of the meetings. Mr. Root's letter of dissuasion may give comfort to other elderly gentlemen who are wondering what service they can still render to society.

October 29, 1918.

DEAR MAJOR: —

I have your letter of the 26th. Do not quit. What if you cannot attend all the meetings. What if you cannot attend any of them. Your continued countenance and comradeship are a source of strength, as they have been for the past seventeen years, to an Institution which really is enlarging the bounds of human knowledge and doing honest scientific work in a modest and unadvertised way. Your name is an asset and a certificate of character. Consider this view of the opportunities of life. — A man lives a long life of active touch and experience in affairs; he acquires the respect and confidence of the community; his strength declines but his judgment ripens. As he loses his capacity for the service of youth in active exertion, he acquires capacity for a new service of discrimination and guidance between the true and false objects and methods to which the oncoming generations are to devote themselves. Thousands of vague proposals, visionary schemes, dishonest schemes, waste money and effort, come to nothing. One of the services a man can render in his old age is to give the credit acquired in a long life to the things that are honest and practical and useful; so that there shall be some leadership of effort, some guide to the abounding energy of people who want to do good in the world, and do not know quite how to direct their own energies. Without something of that kind, the cranks and ignorant enthusiasts and fakers have a fair chance

to dry up the springs of benevolence with disappointed expectations.

Forgive me for preaching, and believe me, dear Major,
Always faithfully your friend,

ELIHU ROOT.

In July, Mr. Higginson's niece, Mrs. George R. Agassiz, had suggested that he ought to write his *Reminiscences*. His reply was most characteristic: —

. . . As to your suggestion about reminiscences, those about you and various other pleasant people are delightful, but many of my reminiscences are anything but pleasant. I have made so many mistakes, and done so many foolish things, and thrown away so many good chances that I cannot take any particular joy in my life. As to what has been done, that was all in the day's work. I have received more credit in my lifetime than I ever deserved. Did I ever tell you that, if I had not been married, I proposed staying in the army, and, by this time, would have been a retired old veteran, growling at everything. I enjoyed my army life, and, on the whole, did it better than anything else — that is, I was a good regimental officer, but could not have gone above the command of a thousand men. I've not been a good business man, but have come through somehow or other. Yes, I can remember many things within my European life which were interesting to me, and some of them are so still, but they would do nobody any good, and I think they would entertain nobody. . . . To write the *Life* or *Reminiscences* of a man like Alex Agassiz is one thing. But after all, there is too much written and too much printed, and it is very difficult indeed to avoid egotism.

Nevertheless, he set to work, as the passages already utilized in this volume have shown, and in spite of the fragmentary nature of the forty or fifty pages which he dictated, his

recollections were remarkably distinct in detail and racy in style.

But Major Higginson's chief occupation, after all, during the summer and autumn of 1918, was in following the events of the World War. From Marshal Foch's appointment as supreme commander, in March, to the victory of the Allies in November, the Major watched every bulletin. His comments upon that final phase of the military struggle illuminate his character and convictions. Some of the most interesting of his letters are addressed to English friends. To show how completely the international situation had altered within three years, take first this passage from a letter written to Mr. Higginson by Professor Gilbert Murray in 1915:—

OXFORD, *May 30, 1915.*

. . . I cannot tell you how strongly I agree with what you say about the relations of Great Britain and America. Historically there is a great deal to get over between the two nations. The Tory ministry of George III treated you very badly, and did so just in the way that a proud nation is never likely to forget. And again in your Civil War the English upper classes sneered at you and more or less openly sided with the South. And even in the Spanish War there was a section of English society which was anti-American, though it hardly dared to say so in public. And similarly now there are silly people who go about cursing Wilson as a coward or a hypocrite.

The important fact to remember is, I think, that the blind old Tory element in England has been steadily weakening and is now — unless the war should give it a chance of reviving — very nearly negligible in public affairs. Even during the War of Independence the Chathamite Whigs kept up a vehement pro-American agitation. By the time of your Civil War the Liberal feeling was strong enough to prevent any overt action against you, and the working classes were genuinely enthusiastic for you. In the Spanish War I observed

that even the Tory papers hardly dared to utter their feelings: their public would not have tolerated it.

And now — well, I think that what happens is chiefly a matter of mere irritation. Our nerves are strained. We wake up feeling strained and angry, and then look about for someone to be angry with. There is not much fun in abusing Germans; so some people abuse Lord Haldane or Lord Kitchener, and others let themselves loose on President Wilson or on America in general. And of course there is a certain undercurrent of the ordinary irritation that always exists between any two groups of people: between Englishmen and Scotchmen, or between Yale and Harvard. It is very silly and mischievous, but it is human nature.

The feeling with us utilizes as a basis the old Tory contempt for democrats and people with an accent different from the Belgravian accent, and so on. The feeling with you seems to me much more serious. It utilizes the old feeling against England the Tyrant; the Irish feeling of revenge for ancient wrongs, and so on. I have been struck to notice how on our stage the conventional American is nearly always a sympathetic character, — generous and daring and cool and inscrutable; whereas on your stage the conventional Englishman is nearly always unpleasing. We pay for our bad conduct in the past, and cannot complain. What I should like to have more realized in America is that we are not a bit like the England of George III; we really are a progressive and democratic nation. The trouble is that the persons who travel in America are, naturally, chiefly the rich and conservative classes.

About the present crisis, I think Wilson has acted extraordinarily well. At moments I have been anxious; for instance, when there was the proposal for you to buy the German ships. From your point of view I think you are right to stay out of the war as long as ever you can honorably do so. From our point of view I wish you were in. Your navy would be a great help, and your economic resources would make the Allies invincible. . . .

Take next a passage from a letter written to the Major on April 20, 1917, — just after our entrance into the war, — by General Sir George Wentworth Higginson,¹ an English cousin of the Boston Higginsons.

“To-day you and all of you good people, our kinsmen in the West, have been uppermost in my thoughts, for I attended this morning a most impressive service at St. Paul’s Cathedral, of which you will have received a full account in your newspapers long before you read this letter. In the course of my long life I have been present on many memorable occasions at services of a special character at our great Cathedral, the earliest in my memory being the funeral of the Duke of Wellington sixty-five years ago, when I commanded the Guard of Honor which stood reverently at the Western Door when his remains were laid in their resting-place under the Dome. But I do not remember having ever been more impressed than I was this morning. I sat with my daughter in the Chancel, the view of the Dome being broken by the two huge banners — the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, which hung side by side, as if inviting the crowd of representatives of America and Britain to enter the sacrarium as brothers with pledges of undying friendship at the Altar, where the chief dignitary of our Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, stood prepared to ratify the vows. The heartiness with which your National Hymn and the Star-Spangled Banner were sung left no doubt of the sincerity with which this proof of brotherhood was sealed, and the ringing notes of God Save the King fitly concluded a dedication ceremony which will go far towards cementing the alliance of which our two nations have now given practical proof in undertaking to restore peace to the world. . . . You will be glad to know that my pride in my dear old Regiment, the Grenadier Guards, has gained strength as every despatch referring to them arrives from the fighting line. . . .”

¹ Author of *Seventy-one Years of a Guardsman's Life*, London, 1916. He is now (1921) in his 95th year.

Major Higginson's own letter of May 3, 1917, to Dr. Harvey Cushing, who was sailing for the Front with the Harvard Medical Unit, was almost as exultant as the English Guardsman's: —

. . . As a nation, by degrees we seem to be waking up to the seriousness of the situation. I marvel very much that the country has not seen it before, for it is a world's struggle and nothing less. But it is of no use to cry about "spilt milk." This is our way: we bet on our luck, and some day we shall be left. Perhaps this is the time. Never mind whether the Germans are putting up a bluff or not; never mind about anything except down once and for all the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, releasing the German people from the tutelage under which they have been kept. I lived among them too long not to have great respect for them as a people, — for their past, and I hope for their future, — but it seems as if the devil had got into them during these last two or three years. Meanwhile, the spirit of the French, English and Russians is wonderful. . . . You know that we are all playing the same game, and that life has no value to us if we cannot keep our principles and show them to the world. If men do not want them, we cannot help it, but we can show their beauty and their strength. I could have cried last night to see you going away with all the other fine chaps, and at the same time we can crow with pride. . . .

By March, 1918, he was sobered, like all thoughtful men, by "the terrible waste" of armies. He wrote to Dr. Harvey Cushing, March 7: —

. . . Do you know, one of my first thoughts when on the Continent at the age of 18 was the terrible waste of the armies of all those nations. It took just so many men away from work, and took just so much money to support those men, which

money the poor people and the rich people had to supply; and, after all, the burden comes on the poor people. That was sixty-five years ago, and the thought has been growing with me ever since. If you could have the waste that goes on, you could have a hundred hospitals like the Peter Bent Brigham. After all, we can only consider this world and this life a school, to learn something better, and get ready to lead a more decent life than we can lead here. . . .

When the German lines began to break at last, he saw the confirmation of his life-long faith in the "ultimate decency of things." Passages from a few of his letters follow.

To Mrs. George R. Agassiz, August 21, 1918: —

. . . Until it is beaten out of the stupid German head that they are something more than the common run of us, nothing will be gained; and I do think the making of peace may be harder than the war. Of course they have plenty of education, such as it is; but without a certain amount of humility and a certain acknowledgment of one's weakness and follies, how can anyone make any progress in this world. . . .

To Miss Minna Farrer, daughter of his old friend Sir William Farrer, August 22, 1918: —

. . . There never has been a question in my mind as to who began the war and who wished it. To me almost the worst part of it all is the scheming and scheming through years and years to get possession of this and that thread and to pull them all over the earth in order to compass their ends. They want power, power, entirely forgetting the responsibility that goes with it, believing that they stood next to God Almighty and had his especial approval, which is the worst blasphemy that ever reached my ears. I have always been sorry that,

when the *Lusitania* was sunk, we did not immediately send the German Minister home and clear out the country of a lot of Germans who were here and trying to make trouble. But the country was not awake, was not aroused; it is very large, there are all sorts of people through the West and the South, and they did not care about it and did not feel as hurt as they should. As the war has gone on, our people have become more and more interested in the struggle, and the President has kept pace with them, and has represented fairly progress made. I doubt if he could have led them much faster than he has, and I do think he has shown great ability and has been very firm in his expression of views; in short, he has the country behind him, which is no such easy thing to do in a large and free country like ours. . . . You may not know that I have lived six or seven years of my life in Germany and Austria, particularly in the latter country, and enjoyed the life very much, knowing many people very well and living only with them and not with our country people or yours — indeed, I rarely ever spoke to an Englishman during my life there. I knew very well the stupidity and arrogance of the Germans, particularly in Prussia, but I did not suppose they were such infernal brutes, calculating, premeditating, brutal, cruel, stupid. And just now the U-boats are irritating our people very much indeed, for they are sinking a lot of fishing boats, on which this part of the country relies considerably. The Massachusetts fishermen going to the Coast of Newfoundland and thereabouts make their living by catching codfish and bringing it here to be salted and eaten. It has been a business for a great many years, and will continue so. They are a hardy, resolute set of men, and it is more than senseless for the Germans to sink those boats, for every boat sunk makes a thousand enemies. . . . It seems to me not unlikely that, when it is all over, the different nations will feel better about each other, that you will have toward America a kindlier feeling than you have ever had, that we shall have a kindlier feeling toward

you, and the same between France, Italy and your country and ours, etc. When the war began, I wondered whether this national feeling and international feeling would not spread so as to make the people more amiable. If you live on one side of the street and I live on the other and we cannot speak to each other, it seems a pity; and, after all, the ocean is nothing but a street. . . .

To Mrs. George R. Agassiz, September 26, 1918:—

. . . I hold to my belief of thirty years past, that Germany will have a great upset; that there will be a great revolution, not necessarily a bloody one, but a great change in the status of different classes of people. . . .

To W. R. Malcolm, Esq., of London, October 18, 1918:—

. . . Apparently we are getting through with this thing. We certainly have not won the war as yet, but it does seem to me that the Germans have lost it. The war may drag on, but the Germans cannot win, although they may still do us a great deal of harm; and the more harm they do, the longer bill they will have to pay. . . . Meanwhile, I should think the war would result in a very close union between your country, France and ourselves; and if we stand by each other, it will be very difficult for the world to kick up such a row again. . . .

When I think how the world has changed since I first went to Europe in 1853, I am amazed: sixty-five years, and everything is different. I also remember thinking when there, how on earth the nations were going to pay for all the soldiers and all the armies. If they had not had them, Europe might have been much further along in prosperity; and now I hope that all these things are going to be greatly reduced. . . .

To Miss Minna Farrer, October 22, 1918:—

. . . Since you wrote, the news has all been good, and I believe it will be much better. I cannot see how the Germans, if they have any sense at all, can go on. It is evident they are in a very uncomfortable condition at home, as well as in the Army. A great change in Germany is imminent, and in Austria, and, as it seems to me, it is sure to come. I have thought so for many years, and think the bell is ringing for this change. . . . Meanwhile, this struggle has brought your country, France and ours closer together than anything else could have done, and I hope we shall remain so. It would seem as if there were no more reason for disputes ending in quarrels between our three countries than there would be between you, your father, and me. All this quarreling is really a horrid waste of time, of life-blood and of happiness and goodness. As the war has gone on, our people have become more and more united in their purpose to put things on a proper basis. Throughout much of the country many men and women have not understood the point of the whole thing, but they do see it, and they want nothing except decent conduct of affairs throughout the world. . . .

To his partner, Sir Hugh G. Levick, November 1, 1918:—

DEAR HUGH:—

The shabbiest thing to be said is: "I told you so"; but do you mind my saying it about this war. I did tell my wife in August, 1914, that the Germans would be beaten. The British nation may be thrashed but not beaten, and we all knew it; the French nation were fighting for their homes, and had astonishing brains and courage; the French Army had learned its business, and we see it in their performances. As for our own despised soldiers, you and I knew that our men could be made into excellent soldiers in a short time and would fight

like tigers; they have an entirely different spirit from the Germans; they are not slaves or subjects, but are citizens, and they know it. . . . Now I hope that men will remember that vengeance is not worth while. It will not re-create French and Belgian homes to burn the German homes. If I had it to settle, the Germans would pay to France and Belgium a huge sum, more especially to Belgium for the money stolen and homes ruined. The Germans cannot rebuild the beautiful palaces and libraries, but they can pay a great sum for them. I would take all the German ships, including her Navy, and I would take all her gold and perhaps silver; in short, I would [not] exercise vengeance, but I would ask to have the bill paid and see that it was done. As for the gang of Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, the world has no use at all for them; the simple thing would be to shoot them all; there is no place to put them where they will be harmless. . . .

My boy has been in a remount camp as second in command of seven or eight thousand horses and a large number of men, and now he has been promoted to be chief in command of a remount camp near Chicago. George¹ has one son (a sophomore) in camp, and everybody has a finger in the pie, and rejoices in it. I have had hard work to get hold of my nieces, who are many, because they are doing public work. . . . Concerning this old log, he is useless; he has made no gain for sixty days, is in bed at this minute, has a great deal of pain, and does not know whether he will ever get free from it. His pain is aggravated by the thought that it has not been necessary. But I was so kicked and cuffed last year that I lost my temper and balance, and fretted until the machinery gave way. But we all get something good or bad, and I have had enough of the good, and must take my medicine. As Frank Higginson said to me the other day: "Perhaps we would better make up our minds that we are old men and are useless for work and for fun." It is most lucky for me that I dropped

¹ Major Higginson's nephew.

the Orchestra last year, for I could not possibly have carried the thing on, with its many cares and worries. One thing about it pleases me that people do not know: many a year I have wondered whether I could pay the bills, and have always risked it. It was an engagement for several hundred thousand in a season, and I had to take what came, never knowing what the losses would be. The loss in any year might have been \$100,000 or more, and in those first years I usually had not more than \$300,000 or \$400,000. Of course it was foolish, but nobody ever accused me of wisdom. I have been kept in the firm out of good feeling. Meanwhile, a letter has just come from Mr. Root of a nature which would make any man proud, and nobody within knowledge has ever been treated as I was at that dinner in November, 1914. . . .

To James Ford Rhodes, November 10, 1918 (the day before the signing of the Armistice):—

. . . Think of peace! lovely peace! May I tell you, dear friend, that from Aug. 1st, 1914, I've never doubted the overthrow of these accursed families and their gangs. They were wrong and could not, would not, read the signs of the times. In 1852 I lived in Germany first, saw their ways, charms, treasures, stupidities, waste of men and money in their armies, — which were at that time supports for their thrones and follies, — and it seemed that they must change or *we* were wrong — and the latter I could not believe. For I worshiped our country. A boy of 18 must love something as well as somebody. Therefore I've expected for many years a revolution — peaceful or bloody — and it has come. No words will express the joy. It is Sunday and so I am preaching. . . . Think of the debts, the indemnities to be paid — the banks suspended, the coal and iron gone which has enriched them, ships taken, hogs and cattle eaten, etc. It must be hell. If you sup with the devil, etc. These men can't believe in consequences. . . .

To Sir Hugh Levick, November 15, 1918: —

DEAR HUGH: —

On Monday morning at five o'clock, — that is before light, — the whistles began to blow and the bells to ring, and they did not stop for twenty-four hours. In the streets on Monday and Tuesday there was a fearful crowd and jamboree, long processions, meetings, speeches, music, — and the relief and joy were very great. Of course the Exchanges were closed as the only safe course. Comments are unnecessary. Two or three lines keep coming to me. One of them is Mr. Lowell's ode when the Harvard men came home from the Civil War. One stanza begins: "Bow down, dear land, for thou hast found release," and it is so strong that I never repeat it without my voice breaking. Another is the beginning of Mrs. Howe's poem: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." You who lived so long in this country feel about these lines as I do, not because of your sojourn here, but because you are a man with lots of red blood, who has done his part. . . .

On November 18, 1918, came Major Higginson's eighty-fourth birthday. It was marked by the gift of the great album from his friends, prefaced by the letter from President Eliot which has already been printed in chapter x. The reply follows here: —

November 18, 1918.

DEAR FRIEND: —

Thank you. No gift can now be more welcome or splendid or more comforting even to tears. Never a suggestion of it has reached me, and no words will express my deep sense of gratitude to you for your kind and noble words and to the host of friends, who have put their names to your message. Again I thank you for this with all my heart.

As you know, the orchestra-work arose from a dream of years, a hope, an ideal, a duty, and one to warrant great

risk, and never mind the price in labor or anxiety or failure.

Your own life has proved your faith, and the same is true of many mates of ours, alive and dead.

It is our country and our century, and we do our best. All the more welcome, satisfying are your words and this precious book — to my wife and to me.

Thank you and all our friends.

Yours affectionately,

H. L. HIGGINSON.

An equally serene retrospect of the whole work of the Orchestra is found in this letter to Mr. Gericke, December 28, 1918: —

. . . Now that this war is finished, I can write to you and express the strong hope that you all four are well and content. But first let me say this: When people speak of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and of its beauty, its style, its perfection, they add: "Gericke made the Orchestra." I have known and said this for many years past. Philip Hale repeated it at the Tavern Club dinner last week; Dr. Muck said it to me in Berlin in 1910, and has said it again — "Gericke made the Orchestra." To me this means much, for do you know a better orchestra? Has any orchestra in existence played more concerts or more variety of music, or to more audiences? Has any orchestra done more to stimulate good music in any land, or given more peace and happiness? I know of none; and if this is true, Wilhelm Gericke has been a great benefactor to men, women and children of our day. We have given perhaps four thousand concerts. Last May I gave up the Orchestra, and it is now in the hands of an able committee, who are managing it well and giving excellent concerts. All the Germans have been dropped, and the Austrians kept. Rabaud, an admirable French conductor, is at the head, and the work should go on well. But I often long for a concert such as you gave us — Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert. Only a

Wiener Kind can play Schubert. You, Nikisch, and Muck were great conductors, and the others were good. I like to say these things to you, because you have deserved them and because you are remembered by many, many people with deep respect and affection. Thank Heaven this war is over. It was not necessary, could have led to no good end, and the result of it was sure — so I always believed. We, as a nation, were sure to take part, and the power was on our side. It has injured the Germans terribly in the eyes of the other nations. As for Austria, it was clear that she could not hold together if the Slavs wished otherwise. Now, what next? Bernstorff and Dernburg acted very badly here, and should have been sent away much earlier. Tell me about friends in Vienna. I heard long ago that Epstein had died. How about the Millers? I ask you to greet kindly any friends of mine in Vienna. They must be old, as I am — eighty-four. . . . The Tavern Club is as pleasant as ever, and the men often speak of you with affection. I see how much disturbance there is in Germany and in Austria, and hope that affairs will be adjusted and you will have peace. . . .

He could also look back without bitterness, now, to the long anxieties in State Street. He had written to Sir Hugh Levick on August 2, 1918, this cheerful and philosophical message to a young partner in his London house: —

. . . If X ever said a word to me, I should tell him this: I have always played second fiddle or third fiddle since I have been down-town. I have been the senior for a great many years, and was the practical senior for a great many years more, but there has always been in the firm an abler man than I, — indeed, a much abler man, — and now there are half a dozen better. I do like to be treated with consideration, which has not always been the case, but that came from carelessness more than anything else. I certainly have been treated with great kindness. But I do think that for most people the place

of second fiddle is preferable to first fiddle. If only a man will consider the success of the work of the firm, of the government, of the country, rather than of himself, he will probably reach the same conclusion. If I were X, I should not care whether I was first or fifth in the firm, so I was kindly treated and got my share of what was going. . . . Certain qualities I have, and they may have helped to the success of the firm; but, after all, it was founded by George Lee's grandfather, — who was a very noble old man, — and my dad, — who was honest, tolerably keen, full of common sense, and irascible at times and pleasant at times, — and also by Mr. Henry Lee, whose character was as spotless as that of the others. To them must be added old George Lee, who was a sunbeam, faithful to the last degree, and a man whom nobody ever doubted for a quarter of a second. It was they who made the firm, and I have merely followed in their path. I am not thinking of my own value. I have thought too much of my duties and wishes outside and too little of the firm. If, instead of spending all the money that has been spent outside, I had kept it, I should have five or six millions to-day, and very likely more. But it is all in the day's work. . . .

During the five years, 1914-1919, many of Henry Higginson's old friends slipped away. His sister-in-law, Mrs. Quincy Shaw (Pauline Agassiz), died in 1916: a Lady Bountiful whose labors for kindergartens, day nurseries, and industrial schools will long be remembered in Boston. Mr. Higginson liked the kindly Boston custom of writing brief obituary notices for the "Transcript," and among the friends whose passing was thus commemorated by him were Henry Dalton, Gardiner M. Lane, John P. Lyman, John C. Gray, William Endicott, Ezra Thayer, George Gardner, and Charles J. Paine. For commemorative services by the Loyal Legion he wrote sketches of Colonel Arnold Rand and of Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, and for the Massachusetts Historical Society a sketch of another old comrade, Charles Francis Adams. Of Senator

Lodge's notable memorial address on Mr. Adams, delivered in November, 1915, Mr. Higginson wrote thus: —

MY DEAR CABOT: —

It was beyond words, so full, so true, so tender, and I could not find a word for you to say so — but you know.

Not a word too much, or wrong, and such a just, warm appreciation of a noble, dear friend. Each, every side was there, and it is a great tribute in a lovely form. With Charles's ways and idle chaff, I've always been filled with a full sense of his modesty, which all men did not recognize. To no one in my life have I spoken more freely about himself — and he simply bowed his head. It is idle to say I knew him, yet it seems to me so. Therefore I again say, nothing left out, not a word or a hint not fully true and beautifully given to us forever.

It seems a great gift to me, who had another gift at your hands last year, November 18, which seemed to me too great. Thank you. As a gift to many people and as an oration of wonderful beauty, you have blessed us all.

The first hymn has been running in my head this week and I got out of bed and played it last night — and then our old Commencement hymn. I feel all clean now — purified — and I hope that the day has brought you some comfort — dear old man. Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

Love to Sturgis [Bigelow]. I want that first hymn at my funeral.

Mr. Higginson's note of condolence to Henry Adams on the death of his brother Charles brought this response: —

Sunday, 21 [March, 1915].

DEAR HENRY: —

Thanks! It was I who expected the summons: it was he who got it; but there will be no great difference. I fancy we were both ready.

Indeed, I fancy we were somewhat more than ready. The world had changed too much, and he felt it.

Anyway, good-bye for both, and love to you all.

Ever truly,

HENRY ADAMS.

When Henry Adams died at the age of eighty, in March, 1918, Henry Higginson wrote to Senator Lodge: —

DEAR CABOT: —

Our friends are fading away, and we shall miss none more than Henry Adams. He was a remarkable man in many ways, and was a very true, kind, thoughtful friend to you and me, as well as to many others. His method of entertaining — his table open always to his friends — was delightful; and whenever I think of the house, I think of Mrs. Lodge there, coming and going as if it were her own house. I wish he had had more physical vigor, for he might have accomplished more; but I think no one can overrate the great good which Mr. Adams, when Ambassador in England during the Civil War, did for our country; and Henry no doubt was his right-hand man. He has left behind him various proofs of his ability — and he had a house beyond compare for charm. Dear me, I can say nothing to you about him which is not repeating your own thoughts. . . .

But he never wrote with more delicate feeling than on the occasion of the death of Henry James. The note is addressed to Henry James the younger, nephew of the novelist.

BOSTON, *March 1st*, 1916.

DEAR HARRY: —

It must have been a quiet end to a useful life — with your mother and sister at his bedside — to bid him good-bye.

It brings to mind his delightful tale or romance of the "Great Good Place."

He has found it and is freed from the terrible present day. He had many lovers, men and women — and they will always hold him very dear — and be very grateful for his sympathy and love and for his great charm.

One always wonders if a friend has had a happy life, but at least Harry made many people happy and also interested in his views of life. I hope to be included among his lovers, and that your father's and mother's children will remember me as such and as a lover of their two parents. Sometimes you have thought me extravagant in phrase about you all — but my words have been less than my thought and feelings about you all — and if they seem too strong, remember that the halo and the charm of the elders lie on your heads. Why not? Good-bye and love to you one and all.

Your affectionate

H. L. HIGGINSON.

It must not be thought, however, that the mood of Henry Higginson's last years was elegiac. He loved his friends and mourned their passing, but he was always averse to indulgence in grief. For himself, he craved only the "wages of going on." He wanted to give every ounce there was in him, before his own time came. In the early months of 1919 he was in the hospital again, but even there he was planning for the proper celebration of Memorial Day at Harvard. He wrote to William C. Lane, President of the Harvard Memorial Society: —

There must be among the younger men somebody who would warm everybody — and on that occasion we need somebody who has a great deal of fire, discretion and poetry in him. . . . Do not turn to old men; they freeze up, although Wendell Holmes will never freeze, or Root either.

This was in January, and a month later, while still in the hospital, he wrote to Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: —

DEAR WENDELL:—

Thinking of our jubilee when we came home in 1865, and of the beauty of several things, — Governor Andrew's address, Phil Brooks's prayer and, more than all, James Lowell's wonderful ode, — I have dreamed of a like jubilee to the men who have now come home; and next Commencement seems to be the time for it. The men of the time I know tolerably, and no one seems to me so fit as you to say the warm word, full of feeling and poetry, full of patriotism and of common sense, with a fine feeling toward the future. . . .

Major Higginson was unable to attend the meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs at Buffalo in May, but wrote them an eloquent greeting. He presided at Cambridge on Memorial Day, but the effort was obviously too great for him. During the summer he gained in strength, and even chopped and tramped and bought cattle with his son. His letters — mainly dictated now — were as vigorous as ever. The perennial railroad question interested him deeply. He wrote stirring communications about the Harvard Endowment Fund to Eliot Wadsworth, Chairman of the Committee. Concerning the Versailles Treaty he wrote to Miss Minna Farrer on July 24, 1919:—

. . . I am hoping that the Treaty, which does not suit me in all ways, will be signed by our nation, and then that we shall go on. What we all need is to get to work, and we here are already at it. But we want to have all the worry possible removed, and we want Germany and France to get to work. If a man toils all day, he will not be so restless for something else. Our own objections here to various points in the Treaty may be right, and I dare say they are, but I would sign now and give notice that we want the changes made; and, inasmuch as we agree with you and France, I have no doubt it can be managed. It does not seem to me that China has been properly treated, and one never knows about the Japanese, what

they will do or what they will bear. As for this country, it has grown too fast; and a nation is like young people — selfish in regarding itself alone. I think that feeling is disappearing, and at any rate it must disappear. We have become a power in the world and cannot avoid the responsibility. . . .

He hoped that the United States would join the League of Nations — writing thus to President Pritchett on August 5:—

. . . As regards the League of Nations: to a man ignorant of details, as I am, it would seem that there were many objections to be raised to the treaty as made, but I am clear about this: that our course is to vote it through and get it going and get the world going, and shut up; then we will either alter it or we will quit. But of course various additions and changes will be made. . . .

At the opening of Harvard in September, he addressed the new students for the last time. On Sunday, October 5, he was able to attend the ceremony of conferring a Harvard degree upon Albert, King of the Belgians, in University Hall. He seemed too weary to stand or speak, but when he was presented to Queen Elizabeth, he bowed over her hand with the grace and gallantry of a boy. On the following day he attended a similar ceremony in Cambridge, in honor of Cardinal Mercier; but at the reception at President Lowell's he remained seated. Again he was in the hospital, but recovered sufficiently to attend the dinner of the Friday Club on November 7. He was obviously feeble, but in good spirits. On Thursday the 13th of November, his son being in town, the whole family were together at dinner. The next morning, although he had had a painful night, he dictated letters as usual: to Congressman Winslow and to Mr. Howard Elliott on the railroad situation, to Mrs. John Markoe on the American Academy at Rome, and to Professor Barrett Wendell — a fourteen-page letter already quoted in part — on the early

history of Lee, Higginson and Co. During the morning it was decided that his physical condition made another immediate operation desirable, and he went back to the Massachusetts General Hospital, accompanied by his wife and son. His son remembered later that Henry Higginson had refused to go down in the elevator from his apartment to the street. He walked down the four flights, with head erect, like those comrades of his boyhood of whom he had once written that "quietly and happily, with their eyes fixed on the sun, they rode into the valley of death and never came back." His wife and son remained with him to the end, but he never regained consciousness after the operation, and before that November evening ended, he was gone. Had he lived four days longer, he would have been eighty-five.

On Monday, November 17, he was buried from Appleton Chapel, where he had been married nearly fifty-six years before. Members of the Symphony Orchestra played Handel's Largo in D Major, and there was organ music from Brahms and Bach, and the University Hymn sung by the College choir. The American flag draped the coffin, and on it rested the sword which Major Higginson had carried in the Civil War. Then, between the long files of undergraduates standing with uncovered heads, he was borne to Mount Auburn, where he rests in peace.

One who was honored by his friendship and has striven to tell the story of his life may be permitted to salute him in the words used by Charles Russell Lowell in a boyish letter to Henry Higginson on March 13, 1858: "*I often think of you, sir, and wish to see the light of your removed countenance. Good-bye.*"

THE END

APPENDIX

THE SOLDIER'S FIELD

OVER four hundred students and graduates of Harvard University assembled in Sever Hall on the evening of June 10, 1890, to hear about "The Soldier's Field," which had been given to the University by Mr. Henry L. Higginson.

PRESIDENT ELIOT spoke as follows: —

GENTLEMEN: At a meeting of the Corporation yesterday, the following letter was presented: —

BOSTON, June 5th, 1890.

To the President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge.

GENTLEMEN: The deeds of Miss Willard's estate will be passed to you to-day, and with them my wish in regard to it.

The estate henceforth belongs to the College without any condition or restriction whatsoever, and for use in any way which the Corporation may see fit.

My hope is that the ground will be used for the present as a playground for the students, and that, in case you should need the ground by and by for other purposes, another playground will be given to the students.

But the gift is absolutely without condition of any kind.

The only other wish on my part is that the ground shall be called "The Soldier's Field," and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends, — alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen, — who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the war of 1861 to 1865 in defence of the Republic.

JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,
ROBERT GOULD SHAW.

This is only a wish, and not a condition; and, moreover, it is a happiness to me to serve in any way the College, which has done so much for us all.

I am, with much respect,

Very truly yours,

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

You are too young to remember these men, but I remember them all. They were all young, — the youngest about 26, — about the same age as the men in our professional schools. They were all schoolmates, college classmates, or intimate friends of Mr. Higginson. He who gives you this field was at College here, and afterward studied in Europe. He enlisted in the infantry at the breaking out of the Rebellion, was transferred to the cavalry, and, after serving faithfully, had to leave the service in 1864 from the effects of his wounds. His six friends died; he lived, became a successful man of business, and has made the best possible uses of his money. He has promoted music in Boston as no other man ever has. This gift which he now makes to you is very near his heart, for, in giving you this land, he feels that he is doing what his friends would have liked to have him do. He wishes to promote manly sports among you, and to commemorate the soldier of 1861. He has come here to-night to tell you of his wish and his hope.

MR. HIGGINSON then said: —

I thank you for receiving me here to-night, and I thank President Eliot for his kind words. I have come to tell you of my reasons for helping you to a playground, and of my wish to link with it my thoughts of the past and my hopes for your future. The story which I have to tell is moving to me, and, if my voice fails, I can only ask you for a hand.

It has been evident for some time that the College playgrounds were too small, and therefore the Corporation of the University and your Athletic Committee have sought to enlarge them. Just across the river, toward Brighton, lie some beautiful marshes in a lovely surrounding of hills, woods, and water, in which Mr. Longfellow used to delight as he gazed at them from his windows; and which he and other friends gave to the College, with the provision that they should be kept open and used for play, if wanted for that purpose. Last summer these marshes were surveyed in order to learn the practicability of draining and using them. But, the other day, when an approach to them was needed, the owner of the adjoining estate refused to sell the right of way. So the Corporation looked at the land of this recalcitrant owner, and considered its value for your games and for its own future needs. The estate lies just across the Brighton Bridge, to the right, and takes in about twenty-one acres of upland pasture and about ten acres of marsh, — in all about thirty-one acres, — with a couple of houses. The Corporation approved of the

land and has acquired it. Do you approve also? I hope so, and, if it suits you, one point will have been gained. You will have a walk to it, but not long enough to weary strong men. Try the ground and see if it is good for your uses.

It is very pleasant to do you a kindness, and everyone is glad of a chance to serve the dear old College. She needs help, and thought, and devotion, and gratitude from us all, for she has given us and our land more than any one of us will give back. She will keep on giving; and I now ask a kindness of her.

This field means more than a playground to me, for I ask to make it a memorial to some dear friends who gave their lives, and all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow men in the hour of great need — the War of the Rebellion. They gave their lives in the cause of virtue and good government, and to save our nation from the great sins of disunion and of slavery. This is what we claim for our northern men.

These friends were men of mark, either as to mental or moral powers, or both, and were dead in earnest about life in all its phases. They lived in happy homes and were surrounded with friends, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sweethearts — had high hopes for the future and with good cause, too; but, at the first call of our great captain, Abraham Lincoln, they went at once, gladly, eagerly, to the front, and stayed there. Not a doubt, not a thought of themselves, except to serve; and they did serve to the end, and were happy in their service.

They were men of various talents and they had various fortunes.

One of them was first scholar in his class — thoughtful, kind, affectionate, gentle, full of solicitude about his companions, and about his duties. He was wounded in a very early fight of the war, and, after his recovery and a hard campaign on the peninsula, was killed at Glendale on the 4th of July, '62. Hear his own words: "When the class meets in years to come and honors its statesmen and judges, its divines and doctors, let also the score who went to fight for their country be remembered, and let not those who never returned be forgotten." If you had known JAMES LOWELL, you would never have forgotten him.

Another I first saw one evening in our first camp at Brook Farm — a beautiful, sunny-haired, blue-eyed boy, gay and droll, and winning in his ways. In those early days of camp-life, we fellows were a bit homesick and longed for the company of girls, — you know how it is yourselves, — and I fell in love with this boy, and I have not fallen

out yet. He was of a very simple and manly nature, — steadfast and affectionate, human to the last degree, — without much ambition except to do his plain duty. You should have seen ROBERT SHAW as he, with his chosen officers, led away from Boston his black men of the 54th Massachusetts amid the cheers of his townsmen. Presently he took them up to the assault of Fort Wagner, and was buried with them there in the trench.

Still another fine, handsome fellow, great oarsman, charming companion, wit, philosopher, who delighted in intellectual pursuits, and in his fellow creatures, whom he watched with his keen eyes and well understood, was killed in a foolish, bloody battle while stemming the tide of defeat. He was at this time too ill to march; but, with other sick officers, left the ambulances because he was needed in this fight. I well remember almost our last day together — sitting on a log in a sluggish stream in Maryland, washing ourselves and our clothes, and then drying ourselves in the sun — and his wonderful talk of the delights of an intellectual life. That was his realm, and no one in our young days did more to mould his mates than STEPHEN PERKINS did.

Yet another — a first scholar, because he could n't help it — full of thought, life, and intense vigor — brimful of ideas — brilliant and strong beyond compare — had soon after leaving College exhausted himself by overwork. After distinguished service with his regiment and on the staff of General McClellan, who singled him out for honor, he led his troopers of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry in the Shenandoah campaign of '64, was always in the front, lost thirteen horses in his daring efforts to win success, and at last, when so wounded that he could not speak, rode forward in his last charge, when Sheridan had come back to win the battle of Cedar Creek. Read the story of that splendid campaign and see how even there the figure of CHARLES LOWELL stands out.

These friends were men of unusual powers, but they all bowed down to the goodness and the purity of one other — JAMES SAVAGE. He also was an enthusiast, and had little health and no words, — but ate himself up with his thoughts and his fiery wishes — sometimes as gay as a lark and then depressed from ill health and disappointment with himself — very fond of his books and of nature — much given to games and a great rusher at football from pure will-power and enthusiasm — courageous to the last degree. We two fellows went to Fitchburg just after war was declared, to recruit a company for the Second Massachusetts Infantry; and when our regi-

ment was ready to march, the colors were entrusted to us. This recruiting was strange work to us all, and the men who came to our little recruiting office asked many new questions, which I did my best to answer; but often these recruits would turn to the "captain," as they called him, listen to his replies and then swear allegiance, as it were, to him. He, the quietest and most modest of men, was immensely impressive, for he was a real knight — just and gentle to all friends, defiant to the enemies of his country and to all wrongdoers. He also fell wounded in that most foolish battle, where his regiment lost fourteen out of twenty-two officers, and was sacrificed to the good of the army. He died in the hands of the enemy, who tended him kindly and were deeply moved by his patience and his fortitude.

The last was a physician, by choice and by nature, if intelligence, energy, devotion, and sweetness can help the sick. After various services from the outstart till '64, he was put by General Grant in charge of the great hospital camp at City Point in Virginia, where 10,000 sick and wounded men lay. Here he worked out his life-blood to save that of others. If I may turn to football language, he played "full-back," and no one ever reached the last goal if human power could stop him.

After the end of the war, New York City needed a vigorous medical officer to cleanse it and guard it against a threatened epidemic, and leading men turned to our friend for this work. General Grant was then in command of the army, and was asked to recommend this physician. But the General was weary of such requests, and refused without even knowing who the candidate was.

"But hear his name, at least," these citizens said; and they told it to him.

Grant at once wrote: "Dr. EDWARD DALTON is the best man in the United States for this place." And Dr. Dalton did one more public service and then settled into private life. Presently he died of disease brought on by exhaustion during the war.

All these men were dear friends to me; and with three of them I had lived from childhood on the most intimate terms, doing and discussing everything on earth, and in heaven, as boys will, — living, indeed, a very full life with them, and through them, — so full were they of thoughts, and hopes, and feelings, about all possible things. These men are a loss to the world, and heaven must have sorely needed them to have taken them from us so early in their lives. And now I ask to mark their names and memories on our new playground. Shall we call it "The Soldier's Field"? Of course, thousands and

thousands of other soldiers deserved equally well of their country, and should be equally remembered and honored by the world. I only say that these were my friends, and therefore I ask this memorial for them.

Mr. James Russell Lowell has, at my request, given me a few words of his own for the stone to be put up on this field, and also some lines of Mr. Emerson. I will read them to you: —

TO THE
HAPPY MEMORY
OF
JAMES SAVAGE, JR.,
CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL,
EDWARD BARRY DALTON,
STEPHEN GEORGE PERKINS,
JAMES JACKSON LOWELL,
ROBERT GOULD SHAW,
FRIENDS, COMRADES, KINSMEN, WHO DIED FOR THEIR
COUNTRY,
THIS FIELD IS DEDICATED.

"Though love repine, and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply, —
'T is man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.'"

And let me say here that the war was not boy's play. No men of any country ever displayed more intelligence, devotion, energy, brilliancy, fortitude, in any cause than did our Southern brothers. Hunger, cold, sickness, wounds, captivity, hard work, hard blows — all these were their portion and ours. Look at the records of other wars and you'll nowhere find examples of more courage in marching and fighting, or greater losses in camp or battle, than each side showed. We won because we had more substitutes and more supplies; and also from the force of a larger patriotism on our side. We wore them out. Let me tell you of just one case. A friend and comrade, leading his regiment in the last days of the war into Richmond, picked up a voluntary prisoner, and this is the conversation between them: —

"Why did you come in?"

"Well, me and the lieutenant was all there was left of the regiment, and yesterday the lieutenant was shot, and so I thought I might as well come in."

It was not boy's play; and to-day these Southern brothers are as cordial and as kindly to us as men can be, as I have found by experience.

Now, what do the lives of our friends teach us? Surely the beauty and the holiness of work and of utter, unselfish, thoughtful devotion to the right cause, to our country, and to mankind. It is well for us all, for you and for the boys of future days, to remember such deeds and such lives and to ponder on them. These men loved study and work, and loved play too. They delighted in athletic games, and would have used this field, which is now given to the College and to you for your health and recreation. But my chief hope in regard to it is, that it will help to make you full-grown, well-developed men, able and ready to do good work of all kinds — steadfastly, devotedly, thoughtfully; and that it will remind you of the reason for living, and of your own duties as men and citizens of the Republic.

On you, and such as you, rests the burden of carrying on this country in the best way. From the day of John Harvard down to this hour, no pains or expense have been spared by teachers and by laymen to build up our University (and pray remember that it is our University — that it belongs to us — to you and to me), and thus educate you; and for what end? For service in your country and your fellow men in all sorts of ways — in all possible callings. Everywhere we see the signs of ferment — questions social, moral, mental, physical, economical. The pot is boiling hard and you must tend it, or it will run over and scald the world. For us came the great questions of slavery and of national integrity, and they were not hard to answer. Your task is more difficult, and yet you must fulfil it. Do not hope that things will take care of themselves, or that the old state of affairs will come back. The world on all sides is moving fast, and you have only to accept this fact, making the best of everything — helping, sympathizing, and so guiding and restraining others, who have less education, perhaps, than you. Do not hold off from them; but go straight on with them, side by side, learning from them and teaching them. It is our national theory and the theory of the day, and we have accepted it, and must live by it, until the whole world is better and wiser than now. You must in honor live by work, whether you need bread or not, and presently you will enjoy the labor. Remember that the idle and indifferent are the dangerous classes of the community. Not one of you would be here and would receive all that is given to you, unless many other men and women had worked hard for you. Do not too readily think

that you have done enough, simply because you have accomplished something. There is no enough, so long as you can better the lives of your fellow beings. Your success in life depends not on talents, but on will. Surely, genius is the power of working hard, and long, and well.

One of these friends, Charles Lowell, dead, and yet alive to me as you are, wrote me just before his last battle: —

"Don't grow rich; if you once begin, you'll find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. Don't seek office; but don't 'disremember' that the useful citizen holds his time, his trouble, his money, and his life always ready at the hint of his country. The useful citizen is a mighty unpretending hero; but we are not going to have a country very long unless such heroism is developed. There! what a stale sermon I'm preaching! But, being a soldier, it does seem to me that I should like nothing so well as being a useful citizen."

This was his last charge to me, and in a month he was in his grave. I have tried to live up to it, and I ask you to take his words to heart and to be moved and guided by them.

And just here let me, a layman, say a word to you experts in athletic sports. You come to College to learn things of great value besides your games, which, after all, are secondary to your studies. But, in your games, there is just one thing which you cannot do, even to win success. You cannot do one tricky or shabby thing. Translate tricky and shabby — dishonest, ungentlemanlike.

Princeton is not wicked; Yale is not base.

Lately I traveled with an ex-Southern artillery officer, and was rather glad that I did not try a year or two ago to take his guns. I asked him of his family, and he said: "I've just sent a boy to Yale, after teaching him all in my power. I told him to go away, and not to return with any provincial notions. Remember," I said, "there is no Kentucky, no Virginia, no Massachusetts, but one great country."

Mates, the Princeton and the Yale fellows are our brothers. Let us beat them fairly if we can, and believe that they will play the game just as we do.

Gentlemen, will you remember that this new playground will only be good if it is used constantly and freely by you all, and that it is a legacy from my friends to the dear old College, and so to you?

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